

*DEAR ME*

**By: Terry P. Rizzuti**

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"Dear Me," by Terry P. Rizzuti

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To the friend I wrote these letters to;  
and to our nation's military and veterans, as well as their families.

## PREFACE

This is a collection of letters I wrote to my high school sweetheart between June 1966 and October 1967. They can be grouped into three parts: 1) letters from Marine Corps boot camp; 2) letters from aboard the USNS Barrett, a Merchant Marine ship taking approximately 1,500 soldiers and 500 of us marines to Vietnam, and 3) letters from Vietnam. The letters all show an attempt by the writer to maintain a lifeline with home, and thus normalcy. For the most part they are rather "typical" of chatty love letters, but every now and again there's a jewel that reveals just how difficult things had become, but even moreso just how young, immature and sometimes downright inconsiderate we were.

TPR

December 19, 2008

June 1966

Dear Me,

I've only got 15 min. so I'll have to make this short but sweet. Fri. is our graduation from boot camp & I wish you could be here so that I could show you around the base. Most of the guys have the girls & relatives etc. coming to see them but I guess I'll just have to play the lone wolf as usual.

After you get this letter there's no sense in you writing again until I write you 'cause I'll be at Camp Pendleton with a new address. I'll write you from there first chance I get. This Thurs. I think I get my orders. I just hope & pray they don't say Viet Nam because from what I hear that's the last place I want to go.

I figure that some time in Aug I'll be home & boy I can't wait to see my little brother. Hell he'll probably look different by the time I get home. He passed the 1<sup>st</sup> grade & from what I hear my {sister} Patty's doing tremendous in school. Well I really gotta go so take care of yourself.

Love, Rock

July 1966

Dear Me,

I guess this another of those letters when I'm not feeling so good. I've received my orders & its [sic] just like I figured. I go to Viet Nam for combat fighting as soon as I get back from my 30 days leave. To tell you the Gods honest truth I'm scared stiff. I'll be here at Camp Pendleton anywhere from 6 to 10 wks learning how to kill – something I don't want to learn but have to in order to live. Then I get 30 days leave in which time I plan to do as many things as I can think of. Woman & booze, mostly. From then on I go to Okinawa to learn jungle warfare for about one or two months. Then little ol' me takes that giant step into hell & eternity. Every night in

boot camp I prayed to god that my orders would read something else but deep down inside I guess I always knew that I was destined to go. I only hope that when I leave here I'll feel confident enough in myself to know that I at least have a half-assed change. [sic] Well, guess what? We get to go to a movie tonight so I guess I better go take a shower in case there's a few broads roaming around. Take care & remember to use my new address.

Love, Rock

4 July '66

Dear Me,

Its not much of a picture but its the best I can do right now. Today I managed to make it down to the beach club on the ocean. I'd been drinking a few beers when I discovered a photo machine & remembered that dear ol' Little One wanted a picture so I dragged my lazy bod off the stool & took a seat inside the machine. I read the directions, inserted the quarter, looked straight ahead & ended up with some pretty screwed up images. You're getting the half way decent one of the bunch so don't complain. And when you get a chance you better send me a picture of you or I'll ask for mine back.

Hi Me! It's now July 5 & we don't start our training until Friday. Not that I'm complaining or anything but it does get kind of boring sitting & getting lazier & lazier all the time. Pretty soon we'll start playing war & it'll be just like the real thing. We'll be firing every type of weapon the Marine Corps uses, eating sea [sic] rations, sleeping out nights, using gas masks, throwing hand grenades etc. It sounds like fun but from what I hear its [sic] a bitch once we start running & crawling. You wouldn't believe the terrain out here. Theres [sic] nothing but hills for miles upon miles. And the wildlife is unreal. Every night we go to sleep with the sound of coyottes [sic]. And theres [sic] one spot on the map called rattlesnake canyon. The rabbits right outside are so plentiful that I just can't believe it. I only wish I had a shotgun & had permission to go hunting. I bet I could bag 25 rabbits in one hour.

You're probably getting pretty tired of me writing & telling of nothing except what we do & what we wish we could do, but you just have to understand the situation. I mean like we don't get to do anything wild on our own. We're cooped up in a bilлот [sic] of 18 guys & restricted to an area of 10 such billots [sic]. Pretty soon we might be lucky enough to receive weekend liberty. If & when that happens I'll be able to write a little more exciting material because I'll head for Los Angelas [sic], Disneyland, Ocean Side etc. I plan to try my hand at surfing but I'll probably just make a fool of myself. Then again with my charm some gorgeious [sic] broad is bound to offer her services in teaching me the art of surfing.

Well Me I've just run out of things to say since I've written you almost every day I've been here. And if I can't find anything to do tomorrow [sic] I'll probably write again. Just bear with it. Bye!

Love Rock

PS – I miss you too although I hate to admit such things

23 July '66

Hey Little One,

I must be nuts or something because instead of going out & having a good time in Los Angelas [sic] or someplace else, I'm sitting here writing a letter. I guess I'm trying to save my money for when I come home next month.

I'm sending you another screwed up picture. This one is what we look like every day when we go out into the field. If you look closely on my face just in front of my left ear you'll notice a slight scar. That's where one of my drill instructors kicked me a few times while I was still in boot camp.

Tonight I'm going to the show to see "Five Bold Woman." I hear its pretty good. Oh, another thing about that picture. I was feeling exceedingly proud when I wrote on the back. Now that I read it over it sounds kind of funny but you know how it is when my mind runs away from me. Sometimes at night I get these strange feelings so I take out my notebook & start

writing. And then in the morning I read what I wrote & don't like it so I throw it away. Its almost like the things I used to write when I'd get drunk. I wish I could explain it.

Well Me, I realize this lett's [sic] awful short but to tell you the truth I just don't know what to say. I'm still wondering whether you're mad about a certain letter I wrote a few days ago so until then be good.

Love, Rock

3 Aug '66

Dear Me,

You couldn't possibly know how sorry I am for assuming that you were not writing because you were mad. To tell you the truth I think I knew deep down that all you were doing was postponing writing so that you'd have time enough to think things over & figure out what was coming off. What really happened was that I was mad at myself for saying the things I said. Although they were true I had no right to say them so I'm sorry. Last Sun. I wrote you a pretty nasty letter. Just disregard it because I was angry with myself & taking it out on you.

Your last letter confused me at first but after reading it a few times I figured it out. I promise not to send anymore of my free verse. I had no idea it would affect you in such a manner.

What you've just read was written 2 nights ago. We've moved now so you'll have my new address. I can come home on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. but by the looks of things I'll have to take a train or a but. [sic]

I'm starting to get my train of thought back so I'll go on with what I was saying before. I've written a few lines of poetry but its [sic] been thrown away because it sucks. Its [sic] easier to stick to the free verse style because you never have to stop & search for a rhyme. Besides everything I write is sad. Maybe I'm feeling sorry for myself but you have no idea what its [sic] like to be training in things which are meant to save my life in a few months. Honestly speaking Me, there's no way in hell that you'll find me the same kid that left home about a year ago. I

listen more, I observe more, I appreciate more, but most of all I don't take an ounce [sic] of shit off of anyone no matter who he is. You see its [sic] a funny thing & especially a scary feeling to be a trained killer. Its [sic] hard to accept & difficult to understand but that's precisely what a marine is – a killer. Its [sic] mainly a mental condition. We're not physically capable of performing ungodly feats but then again we're not afraid to take on anyone even though we'll probably go down trying – if you know what I mean.

When you stop & think about it the amount of training we've had is hardly sufficient to make us ready for the battle field [sic] but something inside us tells each one of us that we can whip any Viet Cong that gets in the way. I wish I could explain it better because its [sic] a pretty interesting thing. If I make it to N.Y. this month I'll see if I can make things better understood. As for us & what I've succeeded in doing (making a mess of things) I don't know, I just don't know; but I guess things will work out o.k.

Well I have to hit the rack so be good & have fun.

Love, Rock

P.S. – Tell Bobby I called him collect but he wasn't home last Sun. around supper time.

No Date

Dear Me,

Hi – I haven't written you in quite awhile & this class is pretty boring so in between notes I'll drop you a line or so. I went to L.A. over the weekend & spent \$60 I had in my pocket. Me & my buddy got a front seat in a strip joint & the main attraction measured 50-26-38 & believe me they were 50's. You would probably get sick in L.A. The state of Cal. protects queers & boys dress up like girls & many times it would take us as long as 15 min. to find out that what we thought was a beautiful broad was actually a boy. Its unreal to see how much a boy can look like a girl.

I'm going home by train on the 23<sup>rd</sup> so I should get there early Thurs morning on the 25<sup>th</sup>. I still don't know whether were [sic] coming to N.Y. or not but if I'm payed [sic] enough money I'll try to make it on my own. That is if you let me stay at your house.

Training's getting a little bit more intensive now & I'm finally starting to to [sic] learn something about combat. Have you heard anything at all about John. I'd sure like to get in contact with him. Also what's with your cousin Sara. Much to my amasement [sic] I only just noticed that you never mention her anymore. Why don't you tell her hello for me. Tell Kate that when I get there I'll take her parking if she wants, unless you'd rather go instead. If you go that'd be much better because I know you better than I do her. You can't imagine how hot it is right now. I'll bet that before the day ends at least 2 guys pass out. Not me though 'cause I'm tough. We're going to be out until 3 AM tonight. How disgusting. Listen I better pay attention here for a while & smoke a cigarette [sic] so I'll try to write again later on.

Well here I am again & now the corporal is talking about mines & booby traps. Did you know that 60% of our casualties are due to the results of mines & booby traps? And did you know that they even boobytrap woman commys [sic] over there. They insert razorblades [sic] in a woman's vagina & when an American soldier has intercourse with her – well you can imagine what happens (all hell breaks loose). I guess I'll have to watch who I associate with over there. That's getting pretty disgusting when they have to mess around with the finer things in life. If something like that ever happened to me it would probably ruin my whole day.

Well "Little One" I gotta go but before I do I'd like you to know that I miss you even if you are getting shorter every year. Take care

Love, Rock

16 Aug '66

Dear Little One,

I can see you now. Sleeping like a little child I'll bet. It's 3:30 here so its probably about 5:30 there. Gosh its [sic] dark & I got stuck with fire watch for 2 hrs. Actually 4 hrs. 'cause I

couldn't wake up my buddy to take my place. He was dreaming about his girl & talking out loud. She's been in Europe for 2 mos. & in time he never got a letter from her until the other day, at which time he just about wrecked the joint – he was so happy. I just don't have the heart to wake him up.

I called my mom yesterday & told her I was going to Viet Nam. She was kind of upset for a few minutes but she'll get over it I hope. My Dad wants her & I to make the trip to N.Y. but she doesn't want to go because the kids are going back to school on the 29<sup>th</sup> so maybe he'll let me go by myself.

You know something. I'm worse than I ever was with money. Last weekend on a Sat. afternoon I left this base with \$77 & Sun. night at 8 o'clock I came back with a little over \$4 in my pocket. I couldn't believe I spent that much but I did. Do you realize that I will be up for 25 hrs today 'cause taps doesn't go until 4 AM tomorrow [sic] morning. I'll probably fall asleep somewhere in the field tonight. Like on guard duty or something.

By the way the Marine Corps has just extended its over seas duty for all personel [sic] to 2 yrs. It used to be 13 mos. Damn! What a rook. You know – the way my luck's been running the past 4 mos I wouldn't be one bit surprised if I married a prostitute & she quit her occupation in 2 wks. Thats [sic] about the way my luck goes – no kiddin'. If I don't get zapped in Viet Nam I'll be there about 9 mos. & the rest of the time most likely in Japan which I hear is one hell of a place to be stationed.

Do you realize this is Tues. & that exactly 1 wk. from today I'll be on a train headed home. I can't wait. My buddy's saving his money so we can go out & get drunk for a few days. If possible I'll see if he can go to N.Y. We can fix him up with a date. She'd have to be pretty short though 'cause he's only about 5'3". Who do we know? You! No –you wouldn't do that to me would you?

I'm afraid this letter keeps getting more & more ridiculous. You see the more tired I get the more juvenile my mind gets. I think that now might be a good time for me to try to answer your question on why I came back to you again & whether or not I'm just lonely or what. Its kind

of hard to say Me. You see I can't ever remember there being a time when I didn't like you even if it was to a limited extent. Those times when you thought I hated your guts & when I thought you despised me with a passion – I can only say that deep down I thought you were a pretty swell girl. I told you about Julie. She was wild & just like me but the only thing was I tried to do to her what I didn't want anyone to do to me & she didn't want anyone to do to her – I tried to tame her – but it was impossible. I don't think I'm quite like that anymore so maybe that's why I still think a lot of you, because you give me the impression that you care what happens to me & Me I'm getting all mixed up again & my eyes are only half open & I'm going to get you all confused if I keep writing so I just hope whatever I've said so far helps you understand a little more.

Take care of yourself & I hope I see you in 2 or 3 wks. 'cause if I don't I'll probably be a pretty sad marine for a long time to come.

Love, Rock

P.S. – Tell Bobby that it doesn't do me a damn bit of good to call him 'cause he's never home.

14 Sept 66

I imagine that by now you're kinda mad at me for not writing. Well I'm sorry but when I got home I had to help move into our new house. When the nights would role [sic] along I'd be too tired to write so there's really no excuse. I tried to get to you're [sic] house that Sat. night but by the time we got out of dinner it was eleven o'clock & I reall [sic] did need the sleep.

Right now I'm back in California. I feel sort of strange & out of place. I'm one of very few privates & most of these guys have been in the Core [sic] for at least a year. Many of them have been over seas around the Meditteranean [sic]. They've got long hair & I feel like some kind of inexperienced girlscout [sic] for some reason. I'm in the 3<sup>rd</sup> division which is located close to the N. Vietnam border by some place called Chulai [sic] or Tulai or something like that. Anyway I don't like it 'cause I'm scared again. This morning they told us we were going over by ship & I just know I'll get sea sick. As it is I still haven't gotten rid of this damn cold. I only know about 3 guys in here.

When I got home I got your [sic] letters the next day or so. I'd like you to know that I had a wonderful time in N.Y. & that being with you did something which I can't find the words to explain. Well, actually that's a lie. I could explain but I'm afraid I'd only mess things up & get you all confused. I'll just say that I think the world of you Me & probably always will but please don't let that keep you home or anything cause I'd rather see you happy & having fun than see you sitting in the house wondering whether you'll ever see me again or not. You will see me again 'cause I'm coming back. It's a fact I'm sure of now cause I've got all kinds of things to look forward to.

I have to do something now so I'll continue later when I have a chance.

Well it's later & all the guys are going out on liberty. I'd go too but I'm only a private so they stuck me with firewatch. I can't complain [sic] though cause I'd do the same thing if I had some rank. We got paid today & now I've got \$150 but there's nothing to spend it on so I guess I'll send it home & have my Mom open a bank account for me. Get this! Thursday I have to write my will. Here I am only 19 yrs. old & already I have to make out a will.

Have you seen ol' Leo yet? I'll bet he's mad cause I didn't go to Old Forge. Actually, I thought you were more important but don't tell him I said that. In a way I feel kind of bad cause I never even got to see Bobby again.

Well Me I'm sort of anxious to get this letter out & since I've run out of things to say I'll say good night. Take care & be good

Love, Rock

25 Sept 66

Dear Me,

Out galivantin' [sic] again huh? Well you just cost me \$1.10 talking to your sister. I don't know whether [sic] she told you I called or not so I'm telling you. Next Sunday I'll probably call again seeing as to how it's my last weekend here in the States. But don't wait around for me to

call cause there's always a chance that I won't be able to call. I'll just play my cards so if you're home – great; if you're not I'll try again later during the week.

I went to Anaheim this weekend & borrowed an I.D. card from a buddy & went bar hopping all night. You know, one place actually had the gall to charge \$1.00 for a beer. I didn't have much fun though cause you have to be 21 to get in so the crowds were all older than me. I gave up looking for a girl to ask to dance cause I swear there wasn't one anywhere under 23 so I was simply shit out of luck.

Well we just got the word that we're leaving on the 7<sup>th</sup> & thats [sic] exactly 12 days away. Getting too close for comfort as far as I'm concerned. I called my mom today & all she could say was that I'd better be carefull [sic]. She's still under the impression that I'm a wild little punk that's liable to do some sort of crazy thing & get myself shot. You know me I'm a born coward. My old man was in Rome last week on business. I wish I could have been there with him. Oh, by the way, I finally got rid of my cold. What a relief it is cause I don't think I could have made [it] up these hills with that cold.

I'm going to Tijuawana [sic] Mexico next weekend. They say that's a pretty mean town so I think I'll match my brains & braun [sic] with them to see who comes out ahead.

Well, Me I'm running out of things to say again except that I miss you again already so be good.

Love, Rock

29 Sept 66

Dear Me,

Read this when you're alone & have the time cause its [sic] pretty involved.

I think this is the coolest paper I've ever set my talented pen to. It's called "Linen Finish." And Me, I don't have all the talent by a long shot. You've got more talent in one finger than I ever thought of having in my whole body. If I had any talent at all I certainly wouldn't be in this mess. The marine core [sic] sucks & I'd give nearly anything to get out of here. You can't

possibly imagine how much I hate it & I've still got 43 mos. to serve. Do you realize that Me? 43 mos! Why that's still almost 4 yrs. Too many things can happen in that time & I hate thinking about it. Do you also realize that if I come back from Viet Nam chances are that after being in the states as little as 6 mos. they can send me over again. I'm such a poor risk I doubt if I can take out any insurance. You know something? My ol' man was right. He was always right. He said I'd regret joining but I wouldn't listen. While I was home I did everything to convince them that I liked it & that I wanted to go to Viet Nam but I lied. I hate it & I'm scared to go – only 8 days to go. That's not very long. To top it off I can't go on liberty this weekend. The captain said I needed new heels on my shoes so I had to take them over to the cobbler shop. Swell! Stuck in a hole with no shoes.

I just reread what I've written so far & it sounds like a sad obituary so I'll knock it off & talk about you. Or at least I'll try 'cause you see every time I start on you I get carried away & I'm afraid to say what I feel because if I do I might mess things up & you'll stop writing. That would hurt. It would bear down on me like a great weight so maybe I shouldn't say the things I want to even when there's the chance that the feelings are mutual. I hope they are Me. I pray to God. You know something? I have your name written all over my helmet. Funny – but it inspires me somehow. I've got a good buddy here & his girls [sic] name is Me. She's from New Orleans & she's Italian. I thought it was coincidental but, I think I ought to tell you something. Its [sic] only fair I guess, but whenever someone asks me who my girl is I show them your picture and say you are. I'm sorry but I'm not sorry. You know what I mean? I hope so because I'm starting to get into one of those free verse moods where I could probably write forever & never speak an intelligible word. Some guys are playing basketball outside. I used to love that game & I wish I stuck with it. There's a peculiar feeling in the air. It's been here all week – ever since we learned we were shipping out on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Everybodys [sic] got on those fake smiles including myself. It's the only way we keep from crying. One guy did cry. There was a time when I'd laugh at a boy crying. This time I had all I could do to keep from joining his depressed state. Everyone writes more & more letters these days. I guess to their families. Its [sic] good.

The Marine Corps sucks. Everyone expects so much of us. They call us men but we're boys – just boys. They try to make fun of the conditions in Viet Nam but at the same time they tell us what its [sic] really like. Everybody laughs that fake laugh yet there's that feeling in the stomach. That empty feeling that just won't quit.

You know Me, you ought to keep this letter for some day it'll probably describe exactly what every kid feels when he finds himself in the same predicament. Weird. The captain inspected all our clothes & equipment today. He was a nice guy. He asked if I had any personal problems. I said no. He asked if I was married & I said no. He said that was good & then again its [sic] bad. I think I know what he meant. It took a while but I think I know. If one dies the wife is hurt & its [sic] hardly fair but at the same time a wife can keep you going because you know that you've got something to come home to. Something dear. Something you'd fight for willingly & at the same time fiercely & fearlessly. You know what I mean Me. I think thats [sic] what the captain meant. At least I hope its [sic] what he meant because in a way its [sic] kind of like what I feel with you & you're not even my wife so I think I know now why all these married guys here seem to be slightly happier than us. Its [sic] a quality, a virtue that can't be denied – instead must be respected which is something I never did before. I considered marriage a burden. Its [sic] funny how wrong some people can be. I wish I could write better. I'm having a hard time expressing myself & it makes me mad cause [sic] what I think is far more intellectual than the simple words I retain in my vocabulary for expressing such thoughts. Its [sic] funny – high school teachers thought I could write; college teachers didn't; I wonder what God thinks. God! Is there such a being? I hope so cause [sic] I need him. Now more than ever. Some say God is Love. But is Love God? There's one for the books. Figure it out & enter it into the scriptures for the benefit of all who care, & wonder, & believe, & experience.

You'll never believe this Me but I just got back from supper & a class & they've given us liberty for the night. No shoes. I can write to you however so that's one consolation. I've sort of lost my train of thought. I love to write like this although you probably hate to read it. I can't help it though cause [sic] everything seems to be closing in on me. Its [sic] almost like when I

was in school. Everything seemed to be closing in. Its [sic] different though. Its [sic] bigger. I wish I could make you understand. Maybe you do understand – I don't know. I hope so cause [sic] I think this letter has some sort of meaning – obscure maybe – but there. Gosh the barracks is nearly deserted. Everyone is taking advantage of these last, very precious days which diminish one by one, hour by hour, quickly – too quickly. The food man is outside. I ought to go get a sandwich & a coke cause [sic] the food tonight was the worst in a long time.

I'm going to close now but there's one more, probably touchy, subject which I'd like to hit upon since I can expect only about one more letter from you until I get over there (the answer to this one I hope). Anyway the subject concerns a certain Pete. Now I'm not trying to ruin this manuscript by any means but it seems to me that even though you pretend to despise him slightly I think that deep down he kind of gets to you & you like him. Otherwise you wouldn't talk about him so much & the two of you wouldn't come into contact so often. You see when a boy knows that a girl doesn't like him he usually doesn't hang around. Apparently [sic] he must see some ray of hope. You sometimes say he reminds you of me. Well, maybe that explains it right there. Think about it a minute. Look how long we hung around with each other constantly bugging one another. It all ended up in our going together. And then I became an ass & fouled matters up. But now look – we're inimate friends again. I don't know Me, maybe I'm just imagining things but that same pattern seems to be happening again. Oh, well maybe its [sic] my stupid imagination again. Anyway don't snuff him out Me. Don't snuff anybody out like I've done & do. It hurts in the long run.

I'm going to call you Sunday only you won't get this letter until after then. Well I'm going to go to sleep now. The radio's playing & Roy Orbison's singing "In Dreams." That's a pretty cool song too. Listen to it sometime. It has meaning. Also listen to "Baby the Rain Must Fall" cause [sic] that song's nothing but great.

Take care & please try to get a letter here before the 7<sup>th</sup>. Take care.

Love, Terry

P.S. (I'd say P.S. I love you but that's the name of a song therefore I'd be stealing & you wouldn't want me to do that would you.)

1<sup>st</sup> Day

7 Oct 66

Dear Me,

I'm on the ship now but it doesn't leave until tomorrow [sic] afternoon. We have to stay on board though – that is all except those who have wives in the immediate area. There's [sic] over 2000 men on this ship. About 500 marines & 1500 doggies. That's [sic] what we call the guys in the Army. It's [sic] crowded as hell & the bunks are mounted 4 & 5 high with about a foot & ½ separating each one which makes it rather difficult getting in & out of bed. The food is awful & it's [sic] a pain when you have to take a shower because they must conserve water therefore they have what they call water hrs. That is we use the showers only during certain hrs.

I should never have called you on the phone Me. I don't know what it is but we just can't seem to communicate face to face. You didn't know what to say & I didn't know what to say so the whole thing was just one big mess – just like when you called me in Okla. I wonder why. Even when I was home we never did talk like I wish we had & I'm sure like you wanted to also. It's [sic] funny cause we manage to get along pretty well on paper. Over the phone I kept getting the impression that something was wrong & even in your last couple of letters. I hope I'm just imagining things again, but if I'm not please tell me cause I'm good at straightening things up.

I finally got that letter from my mom with yours included & I wish I'd gotten it before cause it boosted my morale when you told me about your talk with Leo. I thought that by now he'd forgotten me. Tell him that the first chance I get in DaNang [sic] I'll write him. He's a great guy & if he gets married while I'm gone congratulate him for me, o.k.?

I guess I made a mistake again – this time about Pete. Well I'm sorry cause I think I was jealous. But remember one thing Me, most psychologists agree that there is no such thing as a Platonic relationship between persons of opposite sex. Anyway I just thought I'd say that to

portray my intelligence. One other thing I'd like to clarify & that's that I realize that I've only been feeling sorry for myself so I'll try to change that by being happy & gay. Of course I'll come back – cause I want to more than anything so take care. I'll try to write everyday & I'll place nos. on the envelopes cause you'll probably get them all at once from overseas except this one which I can mail tomorrow [sic]. Be good

Love, Rock

Note the change in rank. No return address until I get there

2<sup>nd</sup> Day

8 Oct 66

Dear Me,

We left about 2 o'clock this afternoon & have been afloat about 6 hrs. There was a band on shore & several citizens to see us off. We all kept yelling for the Marine Corps Hymm [sic] & just as we set sail they played it. It was fantastic. Everyone was yelling & screaming & waving good bye to their wives, families & girl friends.

I feel like I'm on a long drunk. The ship keeps rocking & rolling & the engines give it a rough, shaky feeling. So far I haven't gotten sick but I imagine that once we hit a storm I'll heave ho for sure.

They just showed us a good movie called "Kitten with a Whip." The broad in it was gorgeous but the show stunk. Hope tomorrows [sic] is a little better. I'm going to bed early tonight so I can get lots of sleep for once. I need it. Just before I left they had Catholic confessions & a sermon aboard deck but somehow I fell asleep & when I awoke it was all over. I really wanted to go to confession cause I haven't been since I was 11 yrs. old. I figured it would do some good maybe. Oh well, God probably would have thought that I was only using him. Someday I will go though & see if I can't get back into the religious groove of things. I certainly wouldn't want my children growing up as agnostic as I am.

"Dear Me," by Terry P. Rizzuti

I've got a candy bar in my duffle [sic] bag so I think I'll go eat it. You know something? I'm not really homesick but I sure do miss you & my folks & I even miss the land already.

One good thing about this ship – it's air conditioned. You're probably freezing in N.Y. but I'm sweating here. Good Night

Love, Rock

P.S. – My buddy's got a portable record player & he's got a Roy Orbison albumn [sic] with Crying on it. He's got a Joe & Eddy albumn [sic] too. They're tremendous.

3<sup>rd</sup> Day

9 Oct 66

Dear Me,

You'll have to excuse my writing because this ship is flying all over the place. You wouldn't believe how much its [sic] rocking & rolling. The bathrooms have been completely full all day with sick guys leaning over every bowl. So far I've lucked out but the word is that we'll hit a storm sometime during the night. I only hope I don't get sick. Its [sic] so disgusting I can't stand it. Every where you walk you have to be careful not to step in someones [sic] barf.

Cigarettes [sic] are one [sic] \$1.10 per carton on board. I bout [sic] me a couple before they ran out. Its [sic] amazing how much cheaper everything is now that there's no more taxes. Today they confiscated all the knives & pistols from the troops. They claim they'll give them back when we get to DaNang [sic] but I doubt it.

Tonight the movie was "Roustabout" with Elvis Presley starring. He's got some pretty colorful movies.. The only thing I hate about this type of show is that its [sic] his voice that wins him girls & never him. They say hes [sic] got a black belt in Karati [sic] but I don't believe it. The doggies all like him cause he was once in the Army.

They're playing "Maria" which is a beautiful song but I like the way Dean Martin sings it better than anyone else. Especially including your famed Johnny Mathis.

Somebody just fell on his ass. I thought I'd die for sure. It was so funny. You have to learn how to walk all over again – kind of lean with the role [sic] of boat. Fun in a way except when you go one way & your stomach the other. Up & down, back & forth, all day long. Someone just fell out of bed. Laugh! I thought I'd die. Its [sic] getting worse every minute.

I think I remember you asking me to try talking to you at night. Well I've done that for 2 or 3 mos. now & the only problem is that I get so personal that I don't know how to have you answer me. I'm sure you could make me smile without trying. Happiness would & will be the moment I see you again. It was 12 mos. before I saw you before. I think I can wait another year – if you can. Good night

Love, Rock

4<sup>th</sup> Day

10 Oct 66

Dear Me,

These letters are probably taking the form of a diary now aren't they? Oh, well I think its pretty cool myself. I've never done anything like this before. Tonight we change our watches again. That'll make us about 5 hrs. behind you. We've been changing every 2 days. Right now were about 900 mis. away with nothing but ocean. It kind of looks like one big huge pool.

There's been a couple of sea gulls following us all the way. They sleep on the ship at night & glide along behind us during the day. Its [sic] a long trip.

Tonight the movie was "Alone Against Rome." It was one of those fantastic gladiator pictures. Kind of another Hercules you know. Just before the show started me & a buddy of mine were talking about the good ol' highschool [sic] days. He showed me some pictures of old girl friends so I showed him the pictures I have in my wallet. When he got to your's [sic] he said "God Damn she's nice." I almost died cause that was a pretty good compliment don't you think?

A little while ago I got kind of moody & started a fight with one of the doggies. A corporal made me leave him alone though cause I might get in trouble. Oh, well, ship life kind of does that to you. With all these guys together for so long one can't help but get a little edgy.

Till tomarrow [sic] then, be good.

Love, Rock

5<sup>th</sup> Day

11 Oct 66

Dear Mary,

No, I'm not getting my letters mixed up. Its [sic] just that I happened to remember that your middle name is Mary & I think its a pretty name. You know what I did today, half unconsciously? I scratched the initials "M.M." onto my Lighter for Mary Milton. Now why did I do that. I can only vaguely remember doing it. I do remember it taking me about a half an hour to think of your middle name & when I thought of it – Presto – a scratched up lighter. Crazy, huh?

Early this morning we passed by another ship. Funny that out here in the middle of no where we should meet up with human life. I wish I could have gotten onto it cause it was headed home.

I think I'll wait to mail these from Da Nang [sic]. Maybe I'll have a return address there & you can write me back. They say that we'll know a day ahead of time when Viet Nam is near cause you can literally smell it. It stinks. Think of the worst smell in the world & thats [sic] what the air smells like. Great! Just what I always wanted – fresh country air.

Tonight "Cat Bellou" is on. You most likely already saw it. Its [sic] a pretty good show. I've got to close though so I can go see it. Usually I write after the picture but tonight I need the sleep so I'll be alert on fire watch tomarrow [sic] morning at 4 o'clock. Take care

Love, Rock

P.S. – I miss you.

6<sup>th</sup> Day

12 Oct 66

Dear Me,

Its beautiful out here. The sea is real calm & a warm breeze is blowing. In fact if it weren't for the breeze we'd probably all roast to death cause its getting hotter & hotter every day. As far as I know our lattitude [sic] is 33° Thats [sic] getting down south pretty far.

This Sunday something funny is going to happen. We're going to cross the international date line. That means we go to sleep Sunday night but when we wake up its going to be Tuesday morning. There's also some big tradition about crossing the line. It seems we have [to] be initiated. Aparently [sic] the guys that have already crosse [sic] it get to hit us & play silly assed games with us. God, you'd think we were on a Boy Scout trip or something. From what I understand the initiation procedures [sic] are even rougher when one crosses the Equator. They even give us a pretty cool little card saying that we've crossed the line. Thats [sic] so we won't be initiated again. Life never ceases to amaze me.

I'm still reading the controversial book "Tropic of Cancer" & its [sic] really something. Its [sic] so deep & yet at the same time so simple. He uses every dirty little word conceivable but one can't criticize him because he has a way of making things just flow along nice & natural like. I'm nearly through with it but I think I'll read it again cause some parts I didn't quite understand.

There was a religious movie on tonight but I didn't watch it. Instead I went up on the deck & got to talking with a buddy about the things we did in highschool [sic] like sports etc. He's a lot like me. He was good at track but gave it up. Good in school but hated it. Couldn't get along with his ol' man but does now. Did a lot of drinking & got into trouble. Finally ran away & signed up just like me. Its [sic] amazing how screwed up people can get you know it?

Well I'm tired Me, & I miss you so I think I'll go to sleep & dream. You know something? When I want to dream I can & when I don't want to dream I don't. A slight advantage there. Take Care

Love, Rock

7<sup>th</sup> Day

13 Oct 66

Dear Me,

It gets more & more boring around this place every day. I hate it in a way cause they're treating us like a bunch of babies. We have to sign out for wherever [sic] we want to go on this clanker. Every afternoon we go out onto the sun deck and do physical exercises to keep in shape. Hell if we ain't in shape now 15 mins. a day ain't going to help any. Everything seems so ridiculous like we were a bunch of Brownies or something. I almost can't wait to get there – just to get away from this shit. God, it just entered my mind – what if I had to go home on a ship instead of a plane. I'd go crazy for sure. Probably suffer a heart attack enroute. Depressing.

You should be here. There's not a woman on board & everyone's getting so horny that last night when someone walked up on deck with nothing but a towel on everyone started whistling. I almost died laughing it was so funny. This morning I was on the clean-up detail down here in the compartment & I noticed that some character had a picture of Playboy's Miss October pinned to the bunk above it so that he could stare at it when he's lying in the rack. She's damn good looking too.

I'm just finishing this up later & some body stole my damn pen. Well have fun.

Love, Rock

8<sup>th</sup> Day

14 Oct 66

Dear Me,

Well to start the morning off real bright & shiny we had a nice little inspection. The Captain passed right by me but the Sergeant Major figured it his duty to ask my blood type & gas mask size. I wasn't too sure about the latter question but I figured my head was about average so

I said medium. He took out my dog tags & said I was right. Later I looked at the tags & the "M" I always thought stood for male stood for medium. And I've worn those things for nearly 6 mos. Some people sure are dumn [sic].

We finally spotter [sic] something interesting out here – a great big floating ball that looked like a mine but was probably just a weather balloon.

We've also changed course somewhat to avoid typhoon warnings. I hope we run right smack into one. I don't know why I just hope we do.

Well nothing else has really happened today so I think I'll go up & take a shower. I wish we could get some mail cause this is getting ridiculous. Oh well, I miss you a tremendous amount [sic]. Be good

Love, Rock

9<sup>th</sup> Day

15 Oct 66

Dear Me,

I know you don't like me to call you that but I've been thinking about you all day & I've decided that your name has a certain pleasant ring to it. The longer I'm on this ship the more time I spend thinking & the more I think the more I like you. One of my buddie's [sic] name is Mecis & hes [sic] got "Me" tatood [sic] on his arm. Last night I told him that I wished he was a different Me & he said that he wished that I was a different Terry. That struck me pretty funny.

Tomarrow [sic] we cross the International date line & I can't wait to see what they have in store for us. It ought to be utterly fantistic [sic] knowing the guys who planned it. Tomarrow [sic] I'll let you know all about it.

I think I'll try writing to Leo again. The same thing happened to us that happened between me & Jessie. Both of us were too damn lazy to write. Mostly its [sic] my fault though cause I'm the one with the constantly changing address. Tell him I'll try to write him. I could write him now but I'd rather wait until I get a return address. I'd better write Bobby too cause he

always was a good friend. I bet that some people think I'm a rat cause I always promise to write & never do. Dreadful.

Its [sic] been another uneventful day during our voyage so thats [sic] about it.

Love, Rock

10<sup>th</sup> Day

16 Oct 66

Dear Me,

I know you're not going to believe this but every word is true. I've finally been initiated. We had to crawl through water literally mixed with garbage from trashcans [sic] while a line of guys on either side of us whipped us on the ass with belts. Then we had to stick our faces into this fat guys belly which was covered with grease (green in color). Then we opened our mouths while someone poured juicy [sic] garbage & salt water into them. After I spit that out someone slapped me in back of the head with a handful of grease & said you have now been dubbed into the Domain of the Golden Dragons. Hes [sic] what the card looks like that they gave us.

<p>Domain of the Golden Dragon Ruler of the 180<sup>th</sup> Meridian Know all ye Golden Dragons that on this <u>16 day of Oct. 1966</u> in latitude <u>29°00'</u> longitude <u>180°00'</u> There appeared within my Domain the <u>USNS Barrett</u> &amp; know all ye that <u>PFC Terry P. Rizzuti</u> was duly initiated into the royal Domain of the Golden Dragon</p>	<p>Golden Dragon Ruler of the 180<sup>th</sup> meridian</p> <p><u>Signature</u> Commanding</p>
<p>Davey Jones His Majesty Scribe</p>	

The actual card has a ship sailing on the ocean with a couple of Dragons in the foreground. Its [sic] Green, & Blue & White, & Red & Yellow & Black. I'd send you the actual card, but if I

ever cross agin [sic] I'd have to show the card in order not to be initiated all over again. And I certainly don't want my rear end covered with welts agains [sic].

I saw a bunch of flying fish today. Thats [sic] about the only life I've seen so far. I wish I could see a shark or a whale or something. No such luck though.

Well Me I'll write again Tues. which is tomarrow [sic] – the day after Sunday. Crazy  
Love & miss ya, Rock

P.S. – Look at the envelope. I can't even spell my own name.

11<sup>th</sup> Day

18 Oct 66

Dear Me,

Today's my father's birthday but the funny thing about it is that he won't be celebrating it until tomarrow [sic] because back home its [sic] the 17<sup>th</sup> of Oct.

We didn't really do too much today except maybe recuperate from that damn initiation. Me & my buddy stole a bunch of oranges & went up on the deck tonight & had a little party. We go up to this one spot just about every night & talk. He's the one I told you was a lot like me. It seems like the more we talk the more things we find that we've done the same. You wouldn't believe it. Every crazy thing I ever did in highschool [sic] he's done too. What a panic we have talking about it. And he feels the same way about Viet Nam as I do too. You don't know how much I wish that I could wake up one of these mornings & be facing into the sun instead of having it at my back cause then I'd know we were heading east & east means only one thing – home. He thinks you're cute & another buddy does too but I think you're beautiful. But you better not let these things go to your head, understand. After all they're basing their opinions on a picture.

Well I gotta go Me so be good  
Love, Rock

12<sup>th</sup> Day

19 Oct 66

Dear Me,

Its [sic] been beautiful out today. Something I've never [seen] befor [sic]. The water is perfectly still like a stagnant pond. Its [sic] unreal. Its [sic] something I never thought the ocean was capable of accomplishing – such serenity [sic]. So peaceful & quiet with hardly a ripple, kind of like a new world with the suns [sic] long-reaching arms reflecting off a glass table top with ghastly heat intensity. God its [sic] hot. This is really something one has to see to appreciate. But now the whole beautiful scene is disrupted by this powerful ship creating 3 foot waves & leaving a path for at least a mile behind it. What a shame. Its [sic] color is sort of a light sky-blue as you look towards the horizon but when you look down into it its [sic] kind of medium green.

Oh well it looks like I've gone & done it again – written a bunch of crap – but nothing ever happens on this ship so what can I write that would interest you. I guess I'll wait and see if something happens tommorrow [sic] but I have my doubts. Be good

Love, Rock

13<sup>th</sup> Day

20 Oct 66

Dear Me,

The word is we'll land in Okinawa this Sunday. I hope we get liberty but its [sic] a very unlikely probability. All I've thought about all day is you. Whenever I think about how close we are to Viet Nam (one more week) I think about home & when I think of home I think of New York & that means you. I keep wondering about things – things like do [you] like me. I remember things were all messed up over the phone & you sounded like you hated me for calling. Maybe it was just that you didn't say the things I hoped you would so I didn't say anything & everything was fouled up & I hung up mad. But that didn't last long. It was funny

talking to Alicia again. Whoever dreamed I'd talk to her again after over a year. Does ol' Roxanne (I forgot her last name) still live near her. I can remember me & her used to have a riot in Podraza's Chemistry class. She used to get me into more damn trouble. Believe it or not I started to like her one time so I asked her out when she was still going with Paul. She very politely turned me down.

One time me & Bobby took her & Becky to Sylvan beach. Right down onto the beach I drove while there was still snow on it & the lake was frozen. Then we had a big snow ball fight & like the dumb ass that I am I decided to test the ice. Well it didn't hold me for long & I got back to the car with soaking wet feet only to find that they had locked me out. My feet were practically frozen & I didn't hardly say a word all the way home. Boy I was mad, & they kept laughing & saying I couldn't take a joke.

See how dumb I am. I just happened to think of that incident so had to talk about it. I'm sure you didn't want to hear it. Anyway I must get some sleep so good-night.

Love, Rock

14<sup>th</sup> Day

21 Oct 66

Dear Me,

This is my last sheet of paper like this. That last name I couldn't remember bugged me all night long and I couldn't for the life of me remember it. It was on the tip of my tongue & I finally got it – Robinson. Ever have that happen. God it bothers me for hours when I can't remember something so simple.

We had another inspection this morning but I managed to get out of it because I was on a clean up detail. I worked like hell all morning too.

It seems that there's a darn good chance we'll get a few hours of liberty in Okinawa. If we do this is one kid that's going to get rip-roaring drunk. Probably get into trouble too. Hope not though cause I'd like a clean record when I get out. That way maybe I'll get a better job. I'll

"Dear Me," by Terry P. Rizzuti

probably go to college again though seeing as to how the Marine Core [sic] will pay for it. Maybe next time I'll graduate. No sense worrying about that though I guess. Well Me I hate to make this such a short letter but I have to get up at 3 o'clock tomorrow for mess duty.

Love, Rock

15<sup>th</sup> Day

22 Oct 66

Dear Me,

I'm so tired I doubt if I can stay up another hour. I've been on mess duty all day without a break. Plus I ate just about everything I could get my hands on – cookies, donnuts [sic], icecream [sic], candy, strawberries, appricots [sic], oranges, & apples. I managed to steal 22 oranges, 4 apples, 2 bags of potato chips, 2 gallon cans of strawberries, 1 of raisens [sic], 1 of fruit cocktail, 1 of apricots, & 1 gallon of vanilla icecream [sic]. Right now I'm so full I could just bust.

Liberty is pretty deffinate [sic] for tomarrow [sic]. We're supposed to dock at about 1 in the afternoon & have liberty until 12 midnight. Its [sic] just base liberty though but there's a club on base & of course no drinking age. I can't wait – sure hope there's a band there & plenty of booze.

Honestly Me its [sic] a chore to keep my eyes open so be good.

Love, Rock

16<sup>th</sup> Day

23 Oct 66

Dear Me Mary,

Say it together & its [sic] pretty cool. Oh its [sic] such a glorious morning. The sun is shining violently, the sea is extremely calm, & Okinawa (land) is in sight – just barely visible on the horizon. Liberty is the cry of most everyone on board. Just about one more hour & off I go

into a golden oblivion of alcohol & music. The land's becoming more & more visible every minute. I'll stop writing now for about 15 mins. & continue when we're in the harbor.

O.k. we're there. There's a big beach called "White Beach." I guess because the sand is all white. The ocean is the same color as my highschool [sic] ring – Aqua Marine. The beach is covered with little pieces of coral. The docks got all kinds of officers on it, & there's one woman marine – God is she ever gross – big & fat & ugly. There's even a few Japs fishing over the dock. I have a deffinate [sic] hatred already for all orientals [sic].

Well Me its [sic] about that time & I'm mighty thirsty so wish me luck. I know I'll end up in that ocean tonight. Clothes & all I'll bet. Bye

Love, Rock

17<sup>th</sup> Day

24 Oct 66

Dear Me,

I guess this is what you might call the night after. I hadn't been that drunk in a long time. Me & my buddy drank a half a case first & then made it over to the club where we switched to 7-7's & Singapore Slings. The band was all Japanese but they were pretty good. The go-go girl kept everyone whooppin & hollerin. Beer bottles & glasses were busted all over the dance hall. Fights broke out & it was deffinately [sic] one of the coolest partys [sic] I ever went to. On the way back to the ship we waded into the ocean a ways & watched others swimming with their clothes on. Guys were fighting on the ship while others were diving off the side. Some were puking but all I could do was laugh. It was great but I'm afraid I can't go on because I really must write a letter home. Miss ya

Love, Rock

18<sup>th</sup> Day

25 Oct 66

Dear Me,

Tomarrow [sic] we find out where we're going so that'll be a relieve [sic]. I hope I luck out & get a quiet zone but I know I won't. I just don't have the luck. Guess what? I managed to steal 3 shirts from the doggies. They'll come in pretty handy when my other ones rot off. Plus I can turn them in for new ones as soon as I get to wherever I'm going. Cool. It wasn't right to take them but they do it to us whenever they get the chance.

We got fresh milk today for the first time. Usually they give us stiralized [sic] milk which tastes like sour cream. Must be the officers won't be able to finish all the fresh milk so they're giving some to us.

Tomarrow [sic] we get shots also which is something I don't relish cause one of them's in the hip.

Well tomorrow's the big day so good night.

Love, Rock

19<sup>th</sup> Day

26 Oct 66

Dear Me,

Wish me luck cause I'll be needing it pretty much so. I'm heading for the DMZ (Demiliatarized [sic] zone) in Fubai [sic] just south of the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel. That means only one thing as far as marines are concerned – action & plenty of it. I told you I never luck out. They gave me most of my address but it isn't quite complete so I'll hold off sending it to you. Please write. I'm sending you some stamps cause I don't need them anymore. One thing good about this place – I make more money. By next November I should have over \$2,000. I hope so cause I want a Corvette. I'll even give you a free ride o.k.

We're arriving in Da Nang [sic] tomorrow morning so this is the last time I'll be writing for awhile. Tomorrow afternoon they fly us to Fubai [sic]. Thrills.

Well take care Me & I hope to see you next Nov. but until then for heaven sakes be cool alright [sic]? Tell everyone the great Rock says hello.

Love, Rock

2 Nov 66

Dear Me,

You'll have to excuse this paper but its [sic] been sitting out in the rain all day. I sure hope I get some mail soon cause its [sic] sad watching everyone else open letters when I don't get any. Oh well, its [sic] no ones [sic] fault since I only just got the address.

Yesterday I went out on patrol all day & last night we set up an ambush in pouring rain. Then this morning we searched out a big village but didn't find anything. Still haven't fired a shot. Most of the villagers were catholic much to my surprize [sic]. They had all sorts of religious objects in their huts. It was weird as hell searching the churches too. I kept telling the people "I didn't ask to do this but its [sic] my job." They don't understand anyhow. I've picked up a few words already, which come in handy. This is a dirty place & a dirty job. I haven't been able to shave for the past 6 days, or shower for that matter. You should see my beard. I've only got 1 change of clothes & we'll probably be on top of this hill at least 2 more weeks. At least once a day I get soaked to the skin & at least twice a day I nearly suffer from heat exhaustion. The nights are rainy & cold & the ricepaddies [sic] are murder on the feet. Sounds pretty depressing don't it?

My moms [sic] sending me my camera, I hope. The scenery around here is beautiful. I'd like to get a picture of one of these hellicopters [sic] as its [sic] dropping us water & chow. Its [sic] funny but about once a week the S.P. (Shore Patrol) brings us boxes of candy, cigarettes, gum etc. We even manage to get beer & soda supplied to us. You have to buy it though. And some day when I get a chance I'll send you some of this screwed up money we use.

My birthday's this month & I laugh whenever I think about what I'll be doing that day – tramping [sic] through some mud & getting shot at probably. Send me something nice – like all your love o.k? Well Me its [sic] getting pretty dark so I guess I'll see ya. Take care.

Love, Rock

10 Nov 66

Dear Me,

You'll never believe this but today we celebrated the Marine Corps birthday (191<sup>st</sup>). No lie. We just got back off patrol this morning, all dirty & grimy, & lo & behold there stood this enormous cake. I couldn't believe it cause here we are on top of some good for nothing hill & still we managed to get a cake. It was delicious. A lieutenant colonel even came up & made a speech. You don't see too many of them out in the field. They're too valuable & might get hurt.

Well I've been over here exactly 2 weeks now & haven't got zapped yet. Lucky I guess. I saw one of my buddies get it in back of the head 2 times. Reminescent [sic] of J.F.K. Gross! That's life I guess. You just have to get used to the cold facts. Someone told me that the headlines read that LBJ's trying to end the war in 6 mos. Don't believe it cause there's no way in hell that it'll ever happen. He's just trying to win bucko [sic] (Vietnamese for many or much) points for the next election. Too bad he's a dead beat. I wish I could run this war for about 4 mos. All I'd do is turn these Marines loose & let them kick some ass. Then we'd see some action & this war would end in no time.

I wrote a letter to Leo the other day. First one in about 5 mos. Oh well he understands, I think. I still haven't gotten any mail yet. It takes about a week for a letter to go either way. I imagine you probably got mine by now. You know what I'd do if I was in the states right now? I'd get good & drunk right in front of my parents. Shake em up a little. Let them know what their son's really like. Crazy. We get some beer over here just about every night. They limit us to about 2 but you know me. I can always figure a way to get 5 or 6. I don't get along too well

with my squad leader. He thinks he's god. Nobody particularly likes him but I'm the only one with guts enough to mouth off to him. Consequently he despises me. Tough shit you know?

Well Me I guess I better go so take care of yourself ya hear?

Love, Rock

18 Nov 66

Dear Me,

I still haven't gotten any letters yet from anyone. Maybe its because my letters haven't been reaching home but it sure is depressing getting shot at & not even being able to come back & read a letter of two. That's life though ain't it.

Me I've never been so scared in my whole life as I was the past couple of days. Our squad was moving up a very narrow path with jungle on both sides & the v.c. kept ambushing our first couple of men. We had 2 men badly wounded before we were finally reinforced. Later that day we managed to kill one v.c. & wound another. It got too dark to go home so we had to sleep on the mountain. It poured all night long & nobody got any sleep. The next morning we were reinforced again & we hadn't moved out but about 10 minutes when they hit us again & another of our boys was wounded. Finally we were taken off the hill. I was never so relieved in my whole life. You have no idea what its [sic] like to see rounds dinging at your feet or whizzing past your head. One time I was so scared I couldn't move for at least 3 minutes.

Oh well I hope you get this letter so you can write back. Even my own mother hasn't written me yet which is rather surprizing [sic] cause it isn't like her. Well I have to go look for some c-rations so I won't starve tonight. Be good.

Lover [sic], Rock

23 Nov 66

Dear Me,

You have no idea how happy I was to receive your first letter. I'm sorry I was so hasty about not getting any mail but you know how it is. I'll just bet you're having a riot in that apartment of yours. Too bad you didn't get it last summer so I could have made use of the joint. Have you thrown any parties yet? If not you'd better get started cause I've come to the conclusion that its [sic] the only way to live. You know something funny. As bad as it gets over here at times we always manage to squeeze in a laugh or two here & there. It seems to be the only way we can keep going without getting totally depressed. Just take things as they are I guess.

I think you asked where I am in Viet Nam. Do you see that ink spot on this map down here in the corner? Well that's just about exactly where I am. As for war zone C – its [sic] an Army term which doesn't mean a thing to me. Our headquarters is in Phu Bai just 18 mis. north of us & we're due to go back there any day now. I'll be glad when we do cause then I'll be able to get all cleaned up & wash clothes etc. We seldom get to do important things like that around this place. You know, I'll bet that if I was flown home right this minute people would stand aside & hold their noses as I passed. That's about how bad I probably smell. Of course we're all so used to it we don't even notice it.

Well tomarrow's [sic] Thanksgiving & they're fixing to cook us a big turkey dinner. Thats [sic] pretty decent of them don't you think? At least its [sic] better than the C-Rations we've been getting 3 times a day. Sometimes I just lay back & think of last year at this time. You know what I was doing? I was in college driving around in my Dad's Caddilac with all my buddies. Gosh I'd give a lot to set time back one year. Serves me right though don't you think. My dad always was right but I was just too damn stubborn to listen. Always rebelling & what did it get me? Nothing but a rude awakening.

Gosh Me I'm already on my third page & its [sic] not even my paper. Oh well thats [sic] life. I've been thinking about all those letters you sent to my old address. I sure hope they get here. If they don't however I'll let you know & you can write them all over again, o.k. I'm only kidding cause they'll get here eventually.

Would you believe that my sisters both had perfect timing in getting cards here on my birthday. I was shocked cause I wasn't expecting a thing. The next day I got a couple more from my mother & my little brother. He's going to be 8 yrs. old next month. Its [sic] hard to believe.

So Ralph & Barb got married. That's great. I always wondered when they would. You may think that their marriage got to you but just wait until your's [sic]. Then you'll really be sobbing. I might even consider crying myself if you ever got married -- & it wasn't to me. After all name one couple that argues as little as you & I do.

Its [sic] getting kind of dark out right now but I've got a candle I can use. My Dad's looking for a skin-diving watch for me. They're pretty good in rainy weather. I'm sending home \$160 Dec. 1 so I guess that should cover it pretty good. By the way if you ever need any money just ask cause I've got more than I can possibly spend over here. All I need is about \$20 a month & I get about \$175 so what can I do besides open a bank account back home. Did I ever tell you that next Oct. or Nov. (whenever I get out of here) I'll be getting about 45 days leave. I'll probably spend most of it in N.Y. so hang on to your apartment. I just may need a spot to sack out. Also you'll have to escort me wherever I go cause you're the only only [sic] that could possibly get me home o.k. I will be stone drunk most of the time. I'm sure you understand.

When my camera gets here & I take some pictures if you won't mind developing them I'll send you some of the films. Let me know in your next letter.

About the money you had to pay for all those letters. I guess it was a big mix up cause I didn't send them special delivery so you shouldn't have had to spend a dime. I guess the post office has to make its profits now & then just like everyone else. Oh, well.

I'm going to fix myself some supper now Me so have a good time & I'll be thinking of you always. I do miss you an awful lot I hope you realize. Take care.

Love, Rock

24 Nov 66

Dear Me,

You've made me so happy & yet you don't even know it. I just got 11 letters from you all at once. The other guys were furious cause I got so many – sorry about that. It took me about ½ an hr. to read them all.

I wish we were married too but I'm afraid you wouldn't be too happy Me. Also you wouldn't really get that much money. I think a wife of a P.F.C. only gets about \$90 a month. Of course while I'm over here you get about \$120 or so. But then again we couldn't very easily get married while I'm over here now could we? I wonder if there's such a thing as marriage by proxy. I couldn't trust anyone in my place anyway. I'm only being funny Me. Most of the guys I'm with over here are married. Seems kind of weird in a way cause many of them are younger than I am. My squad leader asked me if I was married & I said no. Then he asked if I was engaged & the answer was still negative. Then he made me mad when he said "I bet you don't even have a steady do you?" I told him yes – is that O.K? I'd like to bust him right in the mouth but then I'd end up a Private again which is something I don't need. By the time I get home I'd like to be a Corporal. Then if we got hitched you'd have buko [sic] money. Maybe me & Leo could make it a duet without any best men involved O.K? (Excuse me while I go get a beer) In the short while I was gone I lost the pen I was using – disgusting.

All I said about you in that letter to Leo was for him to take care of you because I thought a lot about you & I do think a lot about you Me – more than you can ever imagine. I'm not exactly sure what it is but I know I'd give anything to be with you right now. I only wish I knew how you feel or rather I wish I was sure. Why don't you tell me the deep dark secrets you told Conniff. Then I'd probably be set straight.

I can't send you a picture of my buddy cause we got sent to different places. Hes [sic] in Da Nang [sic] I think. By the way I am going to let my hair grow long now. I'll send you some pictures someday when I get my camera. You send me some of you too – sexy ones.

Well Me this is getting pretty ridiculous writing by candle light so I'll close now. Be good

Love, Rock

25 Nov 66

Dear Me,

I just now woke up from a very light sleep. All I did was toss & turn all night thinking about you & home. And then this morning. What's the first thing that comes to my mind? Not food as usual, but you. What are you doing to my mind. I hope you realize that you're unconsciously driving me crazy. Not that I mind though.

I think I remember a few questions you asked me like do I write to anyone besides you. Yes, I write to my parents, & my older sister, & one of her 16 yr. classmates who, believe it or not, is a 5' blond & cuter than hell. And I still write to Suzie once in a while, & I write to my old college roommate, & Leo & Bobby & Arnie once in a very great while. About the only other person I write to is a girl from Rome whom you don't know. Her name is Sherry & we went through kindergarten, first, second, third, & 7<sup>th</sup> grades together. We've sort of known each other all out lives.

How do we get our mail? Well you see we live on top of this hill & whenever we come back off patrol the mail is waiting for us. You send it to Cal. where it then goes to Phu Bai where someone from our co. goes & picks it up.

Oh Me you have no idea [how] much you made me laugh when you told me about John & Russ. That's a fellow marine for you. By the way did you ever tell John where I am? I don't think he knows.

I'm reading all your letters over again & am answering questions as I get to them so the next sentences probably won't all go together. You know I'm going to have to be careful what I say to you from now on. I mean I certainly hope you aren't picking the "choicest" letters for Leo to read. You say you hoped I received some letter about John. Well I didn't unless you mean the fight. What the hell is rock-stable.

I just read over that little quotation about letters worth keeping. Its [sic] perfectly true you know. I don't know weather I told you or not but my mom's package arrived along with all

your letters & she even sent one of those pans of jiffy pop corn. I'm still trying to figure out a way to heat it without building a big bon fire. I'll think of something though.

Well Me I realize this wasn't much of a letter but I must fix something to eat so take care.

Love, Rock

PS – You have no idea what a great feeling it is to write Free on an envelope

27 Nov 66

Dear Me,

Please excuse this paper but Tropical Storm Nancy has been pounding away at us for 3 days now & I'm afraid everything is soaking wet, including myself. I haven't been dry for 3 days & nights so say a few prayers for me that I don't catch my death of pneumonia.

I must say I was very happy this morning when I received a big brown envelope of yours. You know the one with all the letters plus my song plus that hilarious poem on plump women. One of my soul brothers' (a colored boy) turned my song into a sensation. He's got a new way of singing it & I must say it sounds good.

My mom sent me two more packages also – decent.

God I'm sorry about this mess I'm making but there's nothing I can do. Our tent leaks & I'm drenched consequently its [sic] difficult writing. I hope my envelopes will stick – they're wet too. I'm in pretty bad shape aren't I? I wrote another letter to Leo. He's probably shocked. I figured that by writing two it was a better way to get one out of him. Agreed? Its [sic] was good to hear about your possible raise. Just tell him your young girlish looks & charms are enough to ratiante [sic] the office thereby rating an increase in pay. If that don't work tell him that I'll use you for a sec. & will pay you more. If he don't want to lose you he'll conceed [sic] but then if he fired you you'd be stuck cause I don't need a sec. just yet.

I sure wish it would stop raining for a day or two so I could dry off. It gets pretty cold just sitting here with nothing to do. Say do you remember that saxophone [sic] my cousin gave

me or didn't you ever see it. Well anyway my soul brother's going to buy it for \$150 so I'm serious if you do need any money I'll send it. O.k.?

Well Me I'm afraid that writing at this particular time is a chore so I think I'll wait till later. You understand. Be cool.

Love, Rock

30 Nov 66

Dear Me,

Seems unbelievable but our platoon got to come back into Phu Bai today & but [sic] whatever we might need. So I bought buko [sic] writing gear. And I even trusted one of these Vietnamese to give me a haircut & a shave. Just a trim for the hair though. It was getting in my eyes & coming down over my ears. By the way Me how do you like mustaches? I'm letting mine grow just for kicks to see what it looks like. I even keep it neatly trimmed.

A little while ago I opened my duffle [sic] bag & dug out [sic] my wallet so I could look at your picture. Beautiful Me, just beautiful. Now I can go another month without looking at it. You know how it is – I memorize it.

Its [sic] raining cats & dogs again. Its [sic] 18 miles back to my tent so you know what that means? It means I'm going to have a difficult [time] keeping this paper dry. We won't be leaving for another hour so maybe it'll stop by then. I even bought a bunch of Christmas cards. If you're a good little girl & don't pout I just might send you one. In this type of weather we have a problem with the envelopes sticking together. If that happens & I can't find an envelope to fit the card you probably won't get one. No big thing though – just a little xmas card.

You know I haven't gotten a letter from my mom in 12 days. I wonder why. I did get some birthday cards & 3 packages though so I guess she figures that makes up for mail. Someday I think I'll write a letter just to my Dad to see if he'll answer it personally. I kinda doubt it cause he's usually pretty busy & hates to take the time for things like that. Besides I think he'd be at a loss for words. You know how it is, we never did get along too well. My mom says he

misses me though & jumps up & down with joy whenever I write or when I used to call from California. Funny thing is I just can't seem to picture my dad jumping with joy. Especially over me. I did cause him many a problem you know. He even blames me for being over here. Hell I'd gladly come home if they'd give me the chance.

Say have you got all kinds of snow on the ground yet? I hope so cause that's the way I visualize it. Were you talking about Kate taking pictures at the Gas Light or was that someone else? If it was her what's she doing home when she's supposed to be in college?

Well Little One not too much has been happening lately & I'm running out of things to say. You know I miss you so I won't bore you with that information. As for your dream I'm not jealous over Pete. After all he's there & I'm here but I wouldn't have walked away from a party mad. Well, not too jealous anyway. Well be good Me & just so me & Pete can be friends tell him hi for me. I mean that too cause I'm serious. Take care

Love, Rock

4 Dec 66

Dear Me,

Feeling a little blue tonight. Wet, cold & shivering. We went on a little patrol today & had to cross buko [sic] rivers & rice paddies. Now its [sic] night time & the wind is howlin' & the rain's drizzling. Right now we're burning a small can of turpentine, trying to dry out some & warm up. Its [sic] not working too well but at least I can see good enough to write. I can't wait to get out of this place. You know something ironic. The Marine Corps can send me back to this inferno again after I've been back in the states for 6 mos. I'm not really too worried about it though cause I'm pretty sure I can get around it. If they ever did though I think I'd probably go AWOL.

I don't really have anything knew [sic] to say. Leo wrote me the other day. Some parts of his letter cracked me up. However he does agree that we ought to have a double wedding. I hope you two girls have buko [sic] money cause you know me & Leo – we like big parties.

One of my buddies gets to go to Bangkok [sic] on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Lucky as hell. You see after you've been over here for 3 mos. You're eligible for what they call R&R (Rest & Recuperation). Its [sic] 5 days plus 2 days travel [sic] time. You can go to such places as Japan, Hawaii, Okinawa, Hong Kong, Guam, Phillipeans [sic] & several others. You have to have \$150. I've got almost 3 more mos. to wait & then whoopie. If you're a good girl I'll call you. Well, maybe. I know I'll call home – COLLECT, ha ha. That ought to shock the ol' fossils up but good. Well its [sic] hard writing under a flickering light. Besides its [sic] bad for the eyes so I'll say goodnight for now.

Love, Rock

7 Dec 66

Dear Me,

Thanks for the card. The ice cream cone on the front made me hungry. You said you'd better get a letter soon & I must say you rate getting one every day but you see I can't always write that often. I'm going to try to make this as long as possible because I'm afraid I won't be able to write for the next four days or so. We have to go out on [a] silly-assed operation involving our whole battalion. Just what I've been waiting for – a chance to get out into the rain amongst all them lovely leaches [sic]. That's the way it goes though. We do all the dirty work while our White House handlers sit back & comment on the wonderful job the marines are doing. You know what I'd like? -- a five min. interview with either LBJ or his honorable Mr. McNamara. Boy I'd tell them mothers where to go.

Well I got a chance to shave again this morning. I don't get to very often so my beard usually grows for about 5 or 6 or 7 days & gets pretty stragly [sic]. You ought to see my mustache. Its [sic] shaping up pretty good. And my hairs [sic] getting longer again too. Just you wait until I get home. I can hear the people now "Rock Phosphate's Back" "Yeah, where is he?" Aren't I a dreamer Me.

You just made me so happy Me & you probably don't even know it. I just now got a letter & card from you. They were both so sweet I almost cried. You said you hate to write lonely letters cause they might make me sad. Me they make me happy cause I know you're thinking about me the same way that I'm thinking about you. Hell I'd give the world to walk you down the street tonight & throw you in a pile of leaves again. And if there ain't no leaves I'll pick you up & drop you in a snow bank. You probably think I've forgotten all the good times we've had. Well I haven't. In fact the things I can't seem to remember too well are the times when we were fighting. And your birthday is on April 12<sup>th</sup> so don't think I've forgotten that either miss primp. And I can even still remember when we were first going together & you & a bunch of girls went someplace to stay for a weekend or so & you sent me a real long letter telling me all about it & how you slept with my picture & got it all crumbled up. See boys remember things too. They just don't admit it. The only thing I'm sorry for is that I think I hurt you too many times. For some reason it always bothered me when I hurt a girl. You know that. Maybe that's why you & I can't seem to say the things we used to. Maybe its [sic] because deep down you're afraid I might drop you altogether again. Please don't think that if you do.

The operation has been changed to tonight instead of tomarrow [sic] but I can't seem to get depressed as usual. Your letter gave me such a tremendous boost. Oh God Me I'm sorry but I just got Further [sic] word that we're moving out in an hour. I wanted to make this much longer but I'm afraid I can't. I won't be able to write for about 4 days like I said but I'll be with you anyway. Take care Me.

Much Love, Rock

PS – I miss you.

10 Dec 66

Dear Me,

I don't understand. In your past couple of letters you've been saying that you haven't been getting any letters from me. I've been writing Me, honest I have. If you haven't been getting any

at all let me know & I'll start sending them to Sherrill again & see if that helps. For instance, did you get the one I wrote about John, or the one I just wrote on 7<sup>th</sup> Dec. In fact have you been getting any at all at your new address.

So how's things been going out that way. Its [sic] too bad about Donna & her possible case of mono. Remember when Jessie got it? He was layed [sic] up for 2 mos. Any way like I said before if you need money I'll send it but I'm not going to just send it unless you ask.

Its [sic] funny but I can't seem to keep my mind on what I'm writing. We had a pretty rough go of it the past few days & one of my buddies died yesterday. I feel kind of bad & just can't seem to write straight. You know what I mean?

I'm sorry Me but I'm going to cut this short cause I just can't seem to concentrate at the moment. I miss you so much. Please understand.

Love, Rock

15 Dec 66

Dear Me,

I haven't been able to work for the past couple of days. It seems like everytime [sic] I sit down to write I get called for some damn working party. Every minute they've got something new for us to do. Always some petty-assed crap that does nothing but make you mad. And since I'm the junior man in the squad I get picked for nearly every shit-detail that comes along. Junior man means that I either have a lower rank than everyone else or I have less time in the corps.

You know if I write to you pretty often I don't miss you as much. But as soon as I start missing a couple of days I can't get you & home off my mind. Maybe I ought to try writing more often so I won't feel so bad.

I got a letter from my old roommate in college. It sure was good hearing from him again. He even sent me the addresses of a couple of broads I used to take out who wanted to know where I was. Think I ought to write to them? If you say no its too late cause I already did. We used to have some pretty wild times in college. One of those girls I used to take out comes from

an extremely rich family & she used to say I looked like Paul McCartney [sic] cause my hair was so long. Oh well you don't want to hear about things like that do you?

Its difficult thinking of things to tell you though Me. I can't tell you about our patrols etc cause that would only worry you. I never tell my mom what goes on around here. She thinks I'm in a nice safe place with no fighting going on. That's ridiculous though cause like I said one of my buddies already died & at least 8 have been wounded. It doesn't sound so safe when you look at it that way. You know something terrible Me. Sometimes I catch myself wishing I could get wounded just so I could get out of this place. But I really don't wish that cause its [sic] an ugly sound when someone's moaning with pain. I can't figure out why I wish such things as that. This place must be getting to me or something – and I've still got about another 300 days to go or so.

Me, you needn't explain to me about Pete anymore. I believe you. You've always had relationships like that. I'm just jealous I guess cause I can't be there to defend myself. Besides I don't like enemies so I'd just as soon be friends with him. Tell him so. But for heavens sake don't go reading my letters to him or I'll start claming up from now on. I'm not saying you are or did but just don't – unless of course they only contain the ordinary stuff.

I just thought of something neat. Next time I get to New York do I get to stay at your apartment? You said you'd let anyone stay there that didn't have a way home & since I live in Okla. I couldn't possibly get home you know. I've got you over a barrel now Me so lets [sic] see you find a way out. I know you will but I'm just curious to see how you do it.

Me, would it be at all possible for you to do me a big favor again & send me another picture of you? You see I've got yours in Phu Bai & there's no way for me to get up there & get them. I didn't bring them before because I figured they'd get wet but now I've got a picture holder to put them in. Anyway I want to be able to look [at] you once in a while you know.

I'm running out of things to say so I think I'll close for now but I'll catch you again later.

Take care

Love, Rock

PS – say hello to that big oaf Bobby if you ever see him floating around.

23 Dec 66

Dear Me

I haven't written in quite a little while have I? Well I'm sorry but I just haven't been in the writing mood for several days now. I've written hardly anyone. I've been getting all your cute cards & I must say its [sic] very thoughtful of you. I don't know what I'd do without you, I really don't.

You know, I've got a little confession to make to you. The other day I wrote a pretty nasty letter to you & then tore it up just before I mailed it. I don't exactly know what got into me but I managed to get hold of a quart of Seagrams 7 & I was pretty well plowed when I got a letter from you telling me that I still didn't understand the relationship twixt you & Pete. Well for some reason I didn't want to hear anything about him because that had been the 3<sup>rd</sup> letter this month telling me the same thing. Anyway I got all fired up & sat down & wrote you a practically illegible 'Dear Jane' letter. Then like a fool I went over & mailed the damn thing. Well yesterday I walked around in a daze & sat in my hooch feeling sorry for what I'd done. Then along came Jack, a colored boy who lives in the same hooch with me sensed what was wrong & he said, "Sorry ain't ya?", & I said "Yeah, but what can I do now, its [sic] done & over?" He says, "Well I figured you was making a mistake so I got the letter back for ya after you mailed it." God, was I ever happy. Maybe I'm making another mistake by telling you this but I had to get it off my mind. I want you to know that I understand how you & Pete are just friends. I guess I'm just the jealous type thats [sic] all. I never used to let things like that bother me. I mean, they bothered me but I always tried not to show it. I remember when me & you were like that in a way Me. It was so long ago & yet whenever I get to thinking about it it seems like only yesterday when me & Leo were both fighting over you. Remember when he tore up your picture on the central stair case right in front of everyone & you wouldn't talk to me because you figured I put him up to it? Do you realize that that was over 3 years ago. Three years! God what I'd give for the next 3 to go by that quickly. How things have changed. Right now we're playing the radio & someone is

singing 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.'" I never used to like things like that but there's something about this place that makes one appreciate everything & everyone. You know, just recently a marine at a U.S.O.-shindig was asked where he was from & he replied, "I was born in Brooklyn but I grew up in Viet Nam." Me, you have no idea how much truth is contained in that one little ol' statement.

Well I guess you've stood just about enough of me for one evening. You'll never guess what just happened. Santa Clause just came & brought us a few very nice gifts. Thats [sic] no lie either. Well be cool Me & I just figured out why you're such a nice little girl. It's because I've given my guardian angel instructions to see to it that your guardian angel keeps you out of mischief until I get home. Take care.

Love, Rock

28 Dec 66

Dear Me,

How's things going. I haven't heard from you in quite a while now but then I guess that's been my fault hasn't it? I haven't been writing hardly at all. I can't help it though. It seems like every time I sit down to do something on my own someone tells me I have to go on some working party which takes up half the day.

I got a letter from Jessie yesterday & I must say I was pretty shocked to hear from him. We're both in the service for the same length of time so when we get out we're going to get together.

I hope you all had a nice xmas cause I sure as hell didn't. I spent xmas sitting out in the goddamn rain all night in an ambush. Sometimes I get so fed up with this place I feel like running away but there's no place safe to go.

Anyway I hope there's no hard feelings about this writing situation cause honest I do write every chance I get, only we just haven't been getting any chances. And to top things off it's been raining day & night for the past 7 days straight. We got a report the other day that during the

month of November it rained 23 inches. Thats [sic] damn near 2 feet of water. What a sorry country to live in, no kidding.

My mom sent my camera out so if its [sic] alright [sic], sometime when I can I'll send you the film & you can develop it o.k?

Well Me I hate to say this but they've done it again. I have to go test fire my rifle cause we've got another ambush tonight. And would you believe its [sic] pouring out.

I'll write again as soon as I can cause I really do miss you buko [sic] much. In the mean time have fun this New Years as I'm sure you will.

Love Always, Rock

PS - I managed to get pretty well plowed on Christmas Eve.

2 JAN 67

Dear Me,

I hope this letter finds you in the best health & spirits. I received your [sic] today & for a moment there I thought it was going to be a 'Dear John.' I hadn't received one in so long that the guys kept singing the song 'Dear John.' God you don't know how worried I was. Me, I really mean this, a girl like you would make any guy proud to call his own. Especially me. I want so much to call you mine – all mine. Can you understand what I'm saying, Me. I think the world of you, only you never give me any encouragement. Is it because we're so far apart or what?

Honestly I don't think of you as being far away. You're always by my side spirilually [sic].

You're what keeps me going. I have a feeling, in fact I'm almost positive, that the feelings aren't mutual. But that's o.k. No – on second thought – it's not o.k. – but there's nothing I can do. If I was home you can bet things would be different cause I'd do everything possible to make you like me. And if I couldn't get you that way – never mind that way probably wouldn't work either.

You might be 32 weeks away Me but believe me it seems like 32 days. I'm not exactly sure what it is. Its [sic] not that I'm over here & things are so depressing that I miss home. Its [sic] something else. I think I love you. In fact I know I do, but I have a feeling that as you read

this you turn kinda cold don't you? Oh well, I'm not asking much or at least I don't think so, but couldn't you please open up just once like you used to. I mean like if there's nothing going – if its all one sided on my part couldn't you at least come out & say so. I won't hold it against you Me, I'll still write; only I won't say things like this. I'll just tell you what goes on – you know like old friends. I don't know, I just can't stand not knowing. I hate it when the guys read letters from their girls telling them sweet personal little things. Or when they get a tape & you can just barely understand what she's saying because she's crying so much. I sit there & I get so homesick & so lonely all of a sudden & wish so much that it was you saying all those things instead of someone else. And I go off by myself & everyone wonders what's wrong but they'll never know cause I'll never tell.

You see Me I don't want you to feel that if you tell me the truth & it isn't what I want to hear that it'll affect me over here. Oh sure it'll hurt. It'll hurt like no bullet ever could but don't think that I'm going to go moping thru [sic] the jungles & get shot. No it won't be like that so just let me know o.k?

Our xmas wasn't much of anything. It was just like any other day. I spent xmas eve on an ambush out in the freezing cold rain. There was no truce like everyone in the states seems to think. Thats [sic] just a bunch of [sic] to make everyone happy. New years eve they gave every squad a qt. of whiskey. Our squad already had two so I got pretty drunk. We've still got some even so I took a few swigs tonight to keep warm. It makes you sleep better too. You know it hasn't stopped raining since the 18<sup>th</sup> of Dec.

You know I've been in the Corps 8 mos. Now. I guess time is going by pretty fast – but not fast enough. I've got to be in the field for 9 more mos. The last month you can spend in the rear & then I can come home. Home! Its [sic] such a distant term but it carries so much meaning. Too bad it takes a place like this to make one grow up & appreciate things more.

Well Little One I'm going to close now cause I've got to get some sleep so take care of yourself will ya.

Love, Rock

7 JAN 67

Dear Me,

How's everything going? It gets kinda boring around here. I can't wait till another month & a half or so goes by. Then I'll be elligible [sic] for R&R (Rest & Recuperation). They send you to another country for a week. You know – just to get away from it all. Wine, women & song. God am I gonna have a ball. I swear I'll be drunk for 7 days straight – 20 hrs. a day. I need my sleep you know. I'm gonna spend about \$300 which should make it about the 7 most glorious days of my life.

You don't know how homesick you make me baby. Every time you write you tell me about parties, bars, booze, the guys back on the block. Oh you've got me jumpin'. I've got to get out of this place before this green machine drives me crazy or something. Less than ten mos. & I'll be back in civilization.

I bought a beautiful radio for my mom the other day. Right now I've got it all wrapped up with scrap pieces of paper. I hope it gets home without busting a gut. I put in a role of film to be developed too. As soon as they send them back I'll send some to you – if you're a good little girl & deserve them.

They made me get a haircut today. Everybody's been calling me beatle so the staff N.C.O. decided it was high time I got a trim. That's all I got though -- just a trim. You know these villagers give better haircuts than the barbers back in the states. They take their time & do a good job. I guess they know that if they mess it up they'll catch a fist in the mouth plus not get payed [sic]. Tomarrow [sic] the villagers are building a skivey [sic] house. That's kinda like a hoar [sic] house. I guess the Captain's getting kinda horny. So is everyone else for that matter. They're gonna put a bar in it too. And give the broads shots & everything. Sounds funny don't it? But its [sic] true.

Oh well, I'm running out of things to say right now. I'm sorry about that last letter I wrote. I meant every word of it but I shouldn't have said it & had no right to say it. So maybe

you better just forget it I guess. I put you on the spot & I know how I'd feel if some girl I wasn't that interested in did the same to me.

I gotta write a few lines home now so take care of yourself o.k?

Love, Rock

17 JAN 67

Hey Little One

How's everything going around your place anyway? I mean like what's happening, any wild booze parties going on? Sure would like to go to a booze party again. I've got the drinking crave again. I told you they opened up a hoar [sic] house didn't I? Well they've got a bar inside & every chance I get to slop down the ol' beer I do so. Running out of money fast though so I guess I'd better slow down until Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> (pay day) should be getting about \$300 this time. Of course, know me, I'll probably lose most of it in the 1<sup>st</sup> poker game I sit in. You didn't know about all the bad habits I've been picking up did you? Yep, me & cards get along just fabuously [sic] sometimes. Maybe you shouldn't even make yourself known to the likes o' me Little One. Hell, once in a while I even chew tobacco. Once in a great while that is. I even smoke too much. Pack & a half per day can you imagine that? I never went over a pack before. God this country is ruining me. I'm turning into a screwed up hillbilly or something. My hair is so long now, everybody calls me beetle. Ain't that a laugh baby. They actually think I resemble Paul McCartney. Me! The worst looking kid on the block back home. Maybe I'm changing little one but I kinda doubt it – no such luck ya know. Oh well at least I'm still living & Oct. is only 9 mos. away. 9 mos! And then only 1 more month & I'll be 21. Me do you realize that odd ball age gives me a legal pass to every bar, casino & nightclub in the country.

Back to reality. You know how I am when I get off on these day dreamin' tangents. Thats [sic] all I ever do around this place. Its [sic] the only way to make the time fly.

Dear Me,

New letter.

One minute later, but new letter anyway. Cool ain't I?

Well I hate to do it but I gotta go. Guess what? I got a new job in the squad – radioman. I really do have to go babe so Roger Out. 10-4 over & all that bull shit.

Love, Rock

PS – You better send me some pictures quick. I don't care how fat you all [sic]. Get it (I'm horny).

Exactly one month before G. Washington's birthday

22 JAN 67

Dear Me,

I gotta move – gotta find me a quiet place. If you're still trying to keep track of my young bod I'll let you in on a little secret. Don't tell anybody but we're moving. Hattin' up baby, hattin' up. Going to Da Nang. No V.C. to worry about – just buko [sic] boobytraps. I've got me a new job in the squad. I think I already told you – radioman. Its [sic] a blast talking on the thing but its [sic] a bitch carrying it.

I got your letter the other day. I'm sure you know which one I mean. It worked a million wonders. It really did. I understand you so much better now. Honestly. And I'll hold off on my off the wall type letters until I think the time's right. Only problem is I'll probably never know when you're ready to hear the things I want to say. But that's o.k. Just maintain coolness & play it by ear.

Tomorrow [sic] morning we're heading for Da Nang by convoy. It'll probably take about 7 hrs. or so. I probably won't be able to write for another few days until we get settled down again. We're back in Phu Bai right now – have been for 2 days. I got your pictures out of my duffle [sic] bag so have no fear I know what you look like again. Everyone thinks you're pretty Me. And you were only 17 in that picture. You best stick to your diet too cause when I get home

if you're anywhere over 105 lbs. I'll see to it that you don't eat or drink a damn thing for 30 days. You've got from now to Oct. to lose how much – 10 lbs or so? I'm only kidding with you Me.

Hey Me I'll be going on R&R sometime so if I bought you a pretty ring would you wear it? You don't have to consider it as meaning we're going together or anything. In fact you don't even have to tell who gave it to you. Just friendship o.k? Between you & me. Just tell me your ring size if you agree to wear it.

The night before last was my first time back here in garrison & boy did I ever get drunk. Then on the way back from the club I got in a fight with two guys & got the best of them too. Believe it or not. Tonight I'm going out drinking too, cause it will probably be my last chance for quite awhile.

Well Little One I gotta make my bird cause this is my last chance to mail this before they move the post office to Da Nang. Take care.

Love, Rock

25 Jan 67

Dear Me,

Hey what's the scoop on you? Are you trying to make me jealous of that Negro boy? Now you know that'll never happen. Of course I guess it would kinda hurt my ego some – I mean like getting beat out by a teasin' tan soul brother just dont [sic] hack the program.

You know I'd rather get a role [sic] of film with your pictures than get a role [sic] of trees, snow, & other civilized scenes. You can send Sara's picture too. I think I've almost forgotten what she looks like.

I can't wait to get home & buy me a car. I've got my choice narrowed down to 4 choices – 'Vette, GTO, TR4, or Sunbeam Tiger. I might get me a cycle too. I don't know for sure yet. All depends on my financial status. In fact I might even give you a ride if I think you rate at the time. You're gonna have to show me some stuff though or I'll make you walk. You don't like riding with me anyway – do you?

No I didn't see the Bob Hope Show. Where in hell do you think I am. I'm in a hole Me, a hole – with rats running around. And I mean that literally too. We go on patrols every other day & ambushes on the nights in between. We take baths every two weeks, if we're lucky. I mean we stink – stink. I smoke like a fiend & drink straight booze every time I can steal it from the villagers. We walk through shit you wouldn't believe & live like pigs – worse even. I'm not trying to make you feel sorry for me Me. On the contrary I'm just trying to set you straight on the situation. We don't get to see U.S.O. shows like the pussies in the Army, Navy & Air Force. The only ones in the Marine Corps that go are the mail orderlies, office workers & air wing. We're grunts Me, out in the middle of no where, with a job to do – a job that sucks & shouldn't be asked of anyone. When we're not patrolling [sic] we're working – doing this doing that – petty-assed shit just to keep us going. The staff & officers can't stand to see us resting. Nearly every letter you get from me Me is written by candle light at night when I should be getting all the sleep I can. So please understand that when you don't get a letter for quite a while its because I'm tired, dead tired. A body can only take so much & believe me we get pushed pretty hard. We're in Da Nang now, on top of a 458' hill & we hump all our supplies up on our backs – chow, ammo, water etc. They could bring it in with helicopters [sic] but the Marine Corps doesn't believe in doing things the easy way. Like I said Me I ain't trying to make you feel sorry for me but don't ask stupid things like Did I see the USO show. You know last year Bob Hope turned to the T.V. viewers & said "I'm gonna show the people back home who's doing the fighting in Viet Nam." "Will all the men representing the Army stand up." And a whole bunch of them stood up & started yelling. Then the Navy, & even more stood up. Then the Air Force & even more than that stood up. Then the Coast Guard & quite a few stood up & the same with the Sea Bee's. Then Bob Hope said "And Last but far from least all those in the Marine Corps stand up." Well believe it or not one lousy marine stood up. And Bob Hope said to the audience "Now you know who's fighting the war."

Well Me I better sign off because I just can't seem to write over half a page before someone interups [sic] me. I miss you an awful lot but I won't say too much more than that only you wait til' this Oct. Things will be different then – or at least I think so.

Please take care & for heavens sake don't go getting youself [sic] involved with no nigger boys. Even if they are as good looking as me.

Love, Rock

29 JAN 67

Dear Me,

Oh you have no idea how excited I am right now. I got R&R to Bangkok [sic] from 10<sup>th</sup> of Feb. to the 17<sup>th</sup>. The partying I shall do. Every night until I keel over. I really do hope you let me know about that ring cause I'd sure hate to buy one & then not know what to do with it.

I've been getting all your letters this week & you can't imagine how much I appreciate you Me. You're my great inspiration. The other night my Dad wrote me a letter for the first time. I was so completely overtaken that I damn near cried for the first time in I don't know how long. Since that time you last saw me. God that was one hell of a sorrowful night. Anyway my Dad even writes as intelligent as he talks. I say that because it was the first time I ever read anything that he wrote other than business dealings. One of these days me & him will see eye to eye. Probably when I get home.

The mail hasn't come in yet tonight but when it does I'll bet there's a letter from you. It never fails – whenever I'm extremely happy or extremely sad the 'Little One' always pulls through.

Say Me why don't you do me a big favor some day when you're sitting around the apt. with nothing to do. Send me some chocolate chip cookies. Only if it won't be too much trouble that is.

Kate wrote me a letter yesterday. I was pretty surprised. We've never written each other except to pass notes back & forth in highscool [sic]. Especially when I liked you & you despised

me for some reason or other. I never did fully understand the situation. I can remember I used to tell Kate that when she broke up with Carl she could always come to me. But she always said that that never would happen. I knew it would though. He was too old for her. You know when I went away to college I kinda liked her but I don't think she knew it. You probably did though didn't you, you little rascal. But that's o.k. Me she's not quite as nice as you although I must admit she always did have one hell of a body on her. That wasn't the right thing to say was it? It's true though.

I can't seem to think of too much more to say so I guess I'll hurry up & mail this so that you won't think I'm not writing. Be good.

Love, Rock

1 Feb 67

Dear Me,

I've gotten myself into a fix haven't I? You've completely misunderstood [sic] me about that hoar [sic] house. I went there to drink & that's it. I wouldn't touch one of them ugly slant-eyed bitches. Boy you sure gave me hell in those two letters. I had to laugh though in a way cause I can almost see you when you were reading my letter. And you're so cute when you're mad.

You think you've got me pegged don't you? Well you don't. As for spoiling my so called "good intentions" by saying I'd had to be in the same spot with someone I didn't care that much about. Me, I didn't say that so you'd tell me how wrong I was. I said it cause that's what I was thinking at the time. "What if Me doesn't think that much about me. I sure put her in one hell of a spot." That's what I was thinking only you have to go & twist things around don't you. But thats [sic] o.k. I understand. And don't take my 'vices' as you put it, so seriously – I was just in a bad way that day. I do have long hair though. And I do have a mustache. And futhermore [sic] Miss Milton I'll come home looking any way I feel like looking. And nobody's going to tell me

different either. You never could tell me what to do before so what makes you think you can now? I haven't changed that much yet.

I'm going on R&R to Bangkok [sic] on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Feb. I don't think I'll call you though. Not that I don't want to though. Believe me when I say I want to very much, but I don't have your phone number & I wouldn't want to call collect because it ain't right. You're probably saying "Boy hes [sic] got enough excuses." They're not excuses really they're not. I think what's [sic] holding me back is that I remember what happened the last time & I don't want it to happen again. Anyhow we shall see what turns up.

Well Me I have to write a few other letters so I'll write later. I'm not trying to chew you out. Just being funny that's [sic] all.

Love, Rock

2 Feb 67

Little One – It takes  
a tricky Little

mind

to read this tricky

Little

Letter

Dear Me,

There's something about you. I don't know what it is, but there's something about you. Something in your letters that keep me happy. I once complained that you never say anything but I retract that statement. They have a certain quality that could never be captured. I'm not trying to make good for that one letter I wrote. I'm just saying I'm sorry for cutting you down. You know what I think it was Me. Some guys in the squad always let me read their letters from there girls & they're all so mushy & at the same time yours [sic] sounded so dull & matter-of-fact. But you've got something over those other broads. You're not wrapped around my little finger & I respect you for that. You're Me Milton & there's no taking it away from you – so I promise not to

try until the proper time comes. I won't know when that is so give an ignorant guy a break & clue him in on the situation.

Me I don't know what I've done to rate so many letters lately but it sure is wonderful hearing from you so often.

I was surprised to hear that Suzie got engaged. The same time I got your letter I got one from her & she never even mentioned her engagement. I'm happy for her though. She's a good kid even though you may not think so. The way I look at it she's worked hard to get where she's at & she deserves every break. I feel sorry for the guy however cause she can deffinitely [sic] get on your nerves. Enough of that subject.

[Next three paragraphs written sideways on the paper, with margins flush left, but subsequent lines slanting to the right.]

So you've seen ol' Leo a few times lately huh? How's the ol' Leo doing anyway? As for Jessie, I got his address from Leo. Jessie didn't get mine from you, he got it from Leo. So don't think you're losing out all the time.

I've only got one more week to go before R&R. I'll try to remember to get you a Vallentine's [sic] Day card. Of course, you know me when it comes to hollidays [sic]. I always forget them – especially when I'm having a good time. A buddy of mine asked me to send one to his girl too.

You know, you're the first person who's ever said I could dance half way decent. You're wrong though cause I can't dance to save my life. I'll try my luck in Bangkok [sic] though & let you know how things turn out. If I don't hear from you before I go I'm going to go ahead & get that ring. Then if you don't want it just send it back o.k?

[Next three paragraphs written diagonally on the page.]

You should see the way the wind is blowing. Like a madman, for the past 2 days. It's unbelievably cold too, for Da Nang at this time of the year.

One day I picked out this broad in the newspaper who wanted to write to guys in Viet Nam. She's from Memphis, Tennessee & she just sent me a picture of herself. God is she ever gross. 38-25½- 37. A real horse Me – a real horse.

Well I just got some bad news. I don't know though it may be good news. Our battalion is getting some disembarcation [sic] officers in. That means one of two [remainder of letter written sideways on the paper, and reads from the bottom up] things. We're either going to Okinawa, which would be just great – liberty & all the things that go with it. Or we're going to the Mecong [sic] Delta, where the shit will deffinatly [sic] hit the fan. I'll just die if we go there. I ain't lying. That's no place for the likes o' me. I don't see why we can't just stay where we are. Things are bad enough as it is. But the Delta – God that's just too much.

Well Me honey babes I better close now because its getting pretty late. I'll be mailing this along with another letter. This one should be read last cause I wrote the other one first. Well be good & I'll be thinking about you. Yes, I would like to take a nap with you, but you know how it is. A P.F.C. doesn't make enough money to support himself let alone a child.

Love, Rock

5 Feb 67

Dear Me,

I don't know what the deal is with this letter problem but honest Little One I have been writing. The funny thing about it is that I thought I'd been writing a little more than usual this past week. I don't know what's happening but I'm sorry if I'm getting you worried. Actually you're being worried over me makes me feel pretty good in a way. Its just nice to know when someone's thinking of you.

One week from today & I'll be in Bankok [sic]. I have to get me a new camera cause the weather screwed mine all up. I've ruined 4 out of the 5 roles of film I had. Not too many things get me all riled up but that did. I damn near smashed the s.o.b. I sure wish I knew whether you'd

wear that ring or not. I don't even know what size to get. I'll get a 6 & if its too big wear it on your thumb – or drill a hole in your nose or something – no big thing anyway.

I wrote you a fairly long letter the other day so I'm kinda drained for news. As for you going out with boys don't worry about me getting jealous cause it would be foolish for me to even dream that you wouldn't do such a thing. I don't expect you not to anyway – you might get stale.

Personally I like long hair on a girl but I know how much better you like it short so go ahead & get it cut. But before you do please send me a picture of what it looks like now. And quit worrying about being overweight. If it bothers you just take snap shots from the shoulders up.

I'm sorry this is so short but I have to – well a – how should I put it – make a head call. Know what I mean Me? ha, ha  
Love, Rock

21 Feb 67

Dear Me,

This is the first time I've had a chance to write since the 9<sup>th</sup> or so. After I got back from Bangkok they stuck me on a 3 day operation. Bangkok is without a doubt the greatest city in the world. I mean that & if I get R&R again, which is doubtful, I'm going back there. I was drunk for 5 days straight & I met the prettiest little girl. I shouldn't tell you this but she was pretty & I showed her a really fine time the last two days I was there. I took her to nightclubs, bars, restaurants, the works -- & she loved every minute of it. She changed her whole outlook on life cause she said I was the first person who ever treated her nice & she just couldn't understand why a boy would be so nice to her. Anyway Me the funniest thing happened the day I left. She started crying – I mean the tears were just pouring out of her eyes & she kept kissing me goodbye & I couldn't understand it because hell I only knew her 2 days so I couldn't have meant that much

"Dear Me," by Terry P. Rizzuti

to her. I'm still puzzled. The night before I left we won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in a dance contest. You didn't know I could really rock out when I get drunk did you.

I tried to call you but I couldn't get connections with the U.S. I couldn't even call my Mom & Dad. Boy I bet they're dissappointed [sic].

I bought you a ring in Bangkok. They wanted \$75 but I'm a pretty good Jew so I got them down to \$23. Its a valuable ring in the States but it isn't worth much in Thailand. Anyway like I said before you don't have to wear it but if you do make of it what you want. Know what I mean? It doesn't mean I have any strings attached to you – its just a preasent [sic] o.k? Happy Vallentines [sic] day. Sorry theres [sic] no card to go with it.

I have to sign off now Me so be good & I've certainly missed writing you these past couple of weeks.

Love, Rock

PS – A good buddy of mine named Herb says Hello. Make that "Howdy Honey!" He's from Texas.

25 Feb 67

Dear Me,

How's everything going? You know I haven't had a letter from anyone for 5 days now. Must be because I went on R&R & slacked off on my writing huh? Oh well. I'm in another one of my sad moods. I don't know why. Guess its because they've been working us so hard around this place. Anyone would think we were some kind of animals the way we've been working. Doing this, doing that, no slack what so ever. I didn't get promoted like I hoped either. Now I don't give a shit anymore. Not about anything. I've only got 7 months left in the field. Eight months & I'll be home. Home – its such a distant word. Sometimes you can almost reach out & touch it. Other times its a million light years off. Seven months – so short yet so long. Can I make it – yeah I can make it. Will I make it – yeah I'll make it. But what will I look like Me, what will I feel like. Yesterday I looked at an old college picture of myself. Then I looked in the

mirror. You'd never know it was the same person. I even found 3 gray hairs. Disgusting. Sure – the attitude is still basically the same – I couldn't care less. But I do care & I only wish I could answer the millions of questions I ask myself day in & day out. Each night I rack my brain for a way out of this green machine (Marine Corps) but I never seem to come up with a logical solution. Today my squad leader was sent to the rear for good. He'll probably get a nice easy desk job somewhere. All because of an old highschool [sic] basketball injury to his knees. Some people have all the luck. You know something – I don't have a damn thing wrong with me – not a damn thing. Well babe please take care of yourself. I've got to go on some silly-assed ambush in a little while. I do hope this letter finds you in the best of health & spirits.

Love, Rock

PS – How do you like my funny picture. The other is of Nancy Sinatra.

3 March 67

Dear Me,

You're crazy, you know that? You're absolutely crazy. Out of the past four letters you've sent me I've about died laughing. I won't bother saying why. Its just that some of the things you say crack me up.

As for the ring I'm glad you like it, & I did pick it out by myself. Although I was kinda drunk when I bought. Maybe that's why I got it so cheap. The lady behind the counter thought I was the funniest thing that ever hit Bangkok. It's a Blue Star Staphire [sic]. That particular stone ain't worth much in Thailand but they're pretty expensive in the states.

And why do you ask such silly questions. Of course I'll get leave when I get home from Viet Nam. The Corps' bad but not all that bad. I'm trying to fix it up so I'll have my leave from the middle of Dec. to the middle of Jan. That way I catch xmas & New Years. Actually I can be home all Nov. but my birthday ain't as important as the hollidays [sic]. Besides I can do more partying the end of Dec.

"Dear Me," by Terry P. Rizzuti

By the way my picture probably took you by surprize [sic] didn't it? Well don't worry about it cause I don't look like that anymore. When I got back from R&R I got my hair cut fairly short & yesterday I shaved my mustache off.

I sure hope you got some mail by now. I have been writing honest.

Well Me I hate to cut this short but the times are demanding. Just thought I'd let you know I'm still alive -- & I plan to stay that way too. So don't go worrying about nothing -- I've got Destiny controlled.

Love, Rock

7 March 67

Dear Me,

I've only got a little bit of time Me so I guess this'll be rather short. It seems we're moving out again. Somewhere south of Da Nang. How far I don't know. Anyway, as the papers have probably already told you, the shit's hit the fan down that a way, so no telling what'll happen within the next week or two.

In any case don't expect too much mail for the next few days cause I think we'll be roughing it for awhile. You know -- no luxuries, writing gear etc.

I got your card today & it was pretty funny, but Me, why do you spend your money like that? I mean like I appreciate it & everything but you don't have to do such nice things for me. I don't rate any -- you know that.

I hate to do this but its getting dark & I can't see too well so don't go doing any worrying on my account. Instead just remember -- the ol' boy can take care of himself.

Love, Rock

[Next two letters were written on 2"X3" paper and mailed together.]

19 Mar 67

Dear Me,

As you can see from this paper things have been pretty rough. We've been out on an operation since the 8<sup>th</sup> & I only just now figured out how to write you a letter. I got this paper out of my little book that contains all the pictures I carry with me. I don't have any envelopes so there's no telling when I'll be able to get this into the mail. I can imagine what you're thinking – either I'm dead or I forgot all about you. Believe me I haven't forgotten you. Its just that we've been sleeping under the stars for the past 13 days & theres [sic] no telling how much longer we'll be out here. Noone's [sic] been able to write home. Right now we're up in the DMZ & I'm so disgusted I can't stand it. They're treating us like pack animals or something.

One day they did manage to get our mail out to us & I got 5 of your letters. God was I ever grateful & that article you sent me was something else. I wanted to explain R&R to you better but I was afraid I'd mess things up. Thank you for understanding Me. It really helps to have someone you can talk to. I'd try to tell you what really goes on over here but I just don't have the intelligence to explain things. Like just yesterday for instance, our corpsman, or doctor, stepped on a boobytrap grenade. Me, I was standing less than 10 yds away & somehow I escaped injury. He was hurt pretty bad. I keep asking myself "why him & not me?" What's so special about me that I should live & a nice boy like that should get blown away. I just can't understand it.

You wouldn't believe how hot it is either – 115°. I'm sweating so much that my clothes are ringing wet & to top things off I can't even get a new pair of trousers. Mine are ripped from my crotch halfway down my leg to my knee. Now isn't that shameful on the part of the Corps. They can't even get me one lousey [sic] pair of pants. Sometimes I get so fed up with this Green Machine I want to cry. I hate it so much Me, -- so much It can't be described. When I get out of this country you'll see the happiest kid in the world. I only hope my parents have a camera with them when I get off that plane. The smile on my face should win all sorts of photo contests.

Oh well here I am bitching but I bet you've got your own little problems too haven't you? Somebody told me that they had quite a big snow storm in New York again this year. If that keeps up I'm not going to live in New York. I'll live in a state where the climate's nice all year

round. You can come too – unless you like those cold winter days. I can't take the cold myself. This heat is too much too. But a place like Anaheim, California is just perfect all the time. Except when it rains of course -- & thats [sic] seldom.

You know what I just thought of? I'll be 21 this November but I'll miss voting at the Pres. election. You know what that means? I'll be 25 before I can vote for my first Pres. What a pity. You've got a birthday coming up April 12<sup>th</sup> haven't you? Well Happy Birthday in advance cause the way things are looking I won't be able to wish you one on time. Jessie's is on the same day, ain't it? I always thought that was one hell of a coincidence.

I've only got about 6 of these picayune pieces of paper so I think I'll stop now so I'll have something to do at another time. Later.

26 Mar 67

Happy Easter

Hi Me,

They still haven't sent us home yet. By the looks of things we'll be this far north forever. You know I haven't had a roof over my head since the eighth [sic]. The other day they got our mail out to us again & one of your letters was particularly disappointing. I don't really know why but I resented it when you said that you used to piece back the notes I used to sent to Saxon. It just didn't sound like you. How could you do that Me, & then wait over 2 yrs to tell me. I guess it was more embarrassing than anything else.

I got all your cute little cards. There was one that you said I probably wouldn't think was very funny & you were right. I got a letter from Leo too. I guess he's pretty well bent over his girl. As soon as he can afford it I guess he's gonna get her a diamond. That should prove rather interesting – don't you think? If I'm his best man I think I'll wear Dress Blues. On second thought maybe I hadn't better. It would be a shame if the best man drew all the attention away from the groom.

Guess what just happen to me? Some corporal just came over & asked me to stand guard in a supply tent & not to let anyone take anything. Well nobody did except me. I stuffed my pockets full of candy. You see they let us come up to this camp called the Rockpile. You may have heard of it. Many marines lost their lives trying to take it. We came here to sign the pay roster & guess how much I'm getting this month -- \$389.

Just enough to go on R&R again only they won't let me go – Darn. So far I've sent a little over \$400 home. If I hadn't gon [sic] on R&R I'd have close to \$900 saved. Ain't that a bitch? And speaking of R&R young lady – I bought you a star saphire [sic] ring. Regardless of whether it's blue or not its a star saphire [sic]. So don't tell me I was drunk & didn't know what I was buying. Why don't you take it on down to the Jewelers & ask him what it is. I don't know about you Miss Milton – you can sure come up with some real winners to get me riled.

I got a letter the other day from some rich girl I took out a couple of times in college. I still haven't figured out how she got my address. I don't know whether to answer it or not. I hadn't heard from her in a year & I'll probably never see her again.

Well babes this is my last piece of paper so now I'll see if one of these guys around here will be kind enough to give me an envelope, & then see if they'll mail it for me. Be good.

Love, Rock

3 April 67

Dear Me,

How's everything going with you these days. We finally got back to DaNang [sic] for a couple of days. Day after tomorrow word has it we're moving out to Chu Lai. Ain't that a bitch – they just won't cut us no slack at all. I think you can honestly tell your friends that you know a boy who has seen all of Viet Nam except for the MeCong [sic] Delta. The way things are looking though, that's probably next on our list.

I got hold of another picture for you. It was taken just North of DaNang [sic]. I managed to scrounge up a small piece of soap so we took a hike down to the nearby stream which is

actually more of a trickle than a stream. Its kind of hard bathing in only a few inches of water but we manage.

I don't know Me. What do you mean when you say you can't sleep because of being selfish towards me. I don't understand. And listen here Little One you needn't pass little hints telling me you're not ready to settle down yet. Don't you think I know that? You may be 20 yrs. old but you only think & act 17 or 18. And don't go getting all riled up either cause even though you may think different this is one boy who isn't ready for marriage either. I've got too many crazy little things to do first – Like drinking. Anyway I won't go into detail cause this may be my only chance to get over to the beer hall for this month.

I doubt that this'll get there exactly on the 12<sup>th</sup> but happy birthday.

Love, Rock

11 April 67

Dear Me,

How's everything going thataway? I'm sorry about writing so infrequently but these people haven't been giving us any slack at all. We're back in Phu Bai again – the same place I started from. Last week we were sent down to Chu Lai for an operation called "Canyon." Our battalion got 200 V.C. I got 3 of them myself. Do you remember the pictures I sent you of me with that boy named Ralph – the one you said was cute. Well he got shot up pretty bad. He was one of my best buddies too but I got revenge for him.

They haven't been giving us our mail either except for the other day. You sent me a pretty nice letter in which you said you couldn't wait for me to get home. What are you trying to do – make me feel good? Cause if you are you're succeeding [sic] quite well. You're right about half my tour being up. I should be home by Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. & here it is April already. Tomarrow [sic] you'll be 20 & no longer a teenager. Now you'll have to start playing the part of a young woman.

About your car. I'm afraid \$114. ain't hardly enough to get a half-way decent car. Wait till you've got about 3-5 hundred. Then get a Chevy so that if you have any trouble with it just take it over to Arnie & tell him I sent you. He'll take care of your car problems with no sweat.

Don't expect too many letters from me in the near future cause like I said they're running us all over this country. I just can't find the time to write anymore. Plus, as you can see I can't even find anything to write on. I guess I'm deffinatly [sic] in a fix huh? This Friday we're going up north again so I can't do anything I want too.

When I get home I'll be coming up to New York. Whatever made you think I wouldn't? I'm only gonna go visit my friends though so I guess that let's you out don't it? I'm only kidding Me. Really I'll probably drop in & say hello. Of course if you invite me to stay at your apartment I'll most certainly have to accept. That is a direct hint in case you didn't notice. And you'd best gather your will power together & lose some weight & grow some long hair. (No more paper damn it) Take Care.

Love, Rock

13 April 67

Dear Me,

I got some paper, but then I guess that's rather obvious isn't it? It took a lot of cageworking to get it but that was no problem cause our squad is made of mostly cageworkers anyway. In case you're wondering what a cageworker is, it's a person who manages to get things beneficial to himself or his friends usually by buying or stealing. Mostly stealing though. Take for instance this paper. When everyone was out of paper we sent one of our boys out & he stole a great big tablet out of the Captain's tent. Yesterday we wanted some liquor so they elected me to try to find some. The only possible way to get some is to sneak down into the village & buy some from the people so thats [sic] what I did. If you get caught you can hang it up.

Thanks for the cute card Me but really you have nothing to be sorry about. Its just that last month & this month things have been rather rough & I was sort of on edge. Any little thing

out of the ordinary would make me mad. I lost too many close friends the past couple of months so I guess I'm a little jumpy. You know when I get home if some ol' jalopey [sic] were to backfire I'll probably go crazy.

You know when I sat down I had all sorts of things to say to you but most of them I've forgotten & the rest I've promised not to say any more.

I got a letter from my Aunt yesterday & she claims that one of my Aunts who is a school teacher has her 36 pupils say silent prayers for me cause I'm over here. Now ain't that sweet of all those little kids. Now if that was me & I had a nut like my Aunt for a teacher I'd probably just sit there & pretend I was saying a prayer. And when she wasn't looking I'd pop her in the ass with a spitball. But then again those 36 little kids are probably scared stiff of that ol' bag. OOPS.

So your Mom & Dad asked how I was huh? Well just tell them I'm still kicking. And that I hope to see them in 6 mos. You know what I ought to do sometime? I ought to write them a letter & say hello. But you know how it is. I hate writing letters to people who don't write back. Just like Leo's parents. I've written them 3 or 4 times & they've never written back.

You know last night I got to thinking about what you looked like that first night I saw you in Gussies last September. And for some unexplainable reason you reminded me of what you looked like when I first saw you in World History Class in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. It was kind of like looking at you all over again for the first time. Funny huh? How come you used to treat me so rotten back then anyhow. You know the coolest move I ever made was when I gave your picture to Leo & he tore it up on the Central Staircase. Very strategic on my part don't you think? The only thing I didn't count on was you thinking that I told Leo to do it. You know what I think – If it hadn't been for Kate things would never have worked out. Oh by the way. You mentioned Frank & that you thought you'd always have a crush on him. Well I'll tell you what you should do – name your first kid after him. Of course if I'm the father you can hang it up cause his name deffinatly [sic] won't be Frank. Say is "Me" a french [sic] name. I had an argument with some dude. I said it was French but I wasn't really sure. I just felt like arguing.

Well Little One your cageworker's got a job to do. I've got to try to find some soda so be good & for heavens sakes keep cool.

Love, Rock

PS – Some day I think I'll send a letter to your office just to see what your boss has to say. Did you ever ask him if I could get some free insurance [sic]?

19 April 67

Dear Me,

How's things been going lately? We've been taking it easy for the past week but tomorrow [sic] we're moving up North again. That's why I decided I'd better write again while I had the chance. No telling when I'll get another chance.

They transferred my Fire-team Leader to another outfit (3/26). We'd been together for the past 6 months. We went on every patrol we ever had. I always walked directly in front of him & we always fought side by side. Took chances together & everything. His name was Corporal Corbin but everyone called him Balt or Baltimore or B-more cause that's [sic] where he's from. He's a colored boy we always got along famously. I don't think I ever told you about him but he always read your letters & I always read his wife's. He thinks you've got to be the craziest girl alive. I won't tell you why cause it would take too long. I guess mainly because he considers me the craziest kid in Viet Nam. It's not true Me, honest it isn't. There's [sic] several boys worse than I am.

Anyway how are you? The reason I ask is because I haven't heard from you in so long. That isn't your fault though. They just haven't been giving us our mail. Whenever they do bring our mail there's always a letter from you & you have no idea how much I appreciate it. But then I won't get into that cause I always get carried away.

I told you before that we moved back up to Phu Bai didn't I? You know it still rains up here every day. I don't know about this country. Sometimes I hate it so much I could cry. But then crying wouldn't do any good would it? It's raining right now even.

I just heard about the "Mars" Telephone service. If I knew your number I'd probably call you. I should call home I suppose but you have to use radio procedure [sic] & you only get 3 minutes. And it would probably just make me more homesick than I already am. Besides if I called you it would probably be 2 min. & 55 sec. of sheer silence. I just know neither one of us could figure out what to say to each other so I'll save us the embarrassment.

Well Me, here it is tomorrow [sic]. I didn't get a chance to finish this last night. We'll be moving out fairly soon so I really don't have much more time to write. My pen just ran out of ink. Take it easy & I'll write again as soon as possible. xxoo

Love, Rock

PS – Use this cool paper to write to Jessie.

22 April 67

Hi Sweetheart,

I never called you that before did I? I guess I'm just full of little surprises. I just got a couple of letters from you plus a couple of cards so I guess that's why I decided to call you sweetheart [sic]. Actually I don't really know whether your heart is sweet or not. It could be sour I suppose. But then again maybe its tart. Anyway – Hi sweetheart. I'm just fooling around you know? I got a letter from my mom yesterday. Do you know what she reminds me of? -- a textbook – always telling me that war is hell & to be especially careful & that woman should run the gov't, so there wouldn't be any wars. Nothing but bullshit cause if women ran the gov't we'd have chaos in every country. In which case my only suggestion is that if woman did run the gov't & war did happen to break out then woman should do the fighting. Then I could sit back & take it easy. What a switch – if you were over here & I was over there. I can't help wondering though if things were changed, could I hack waiting 13 mos. for you. That's why I keep asking myself why you – how come you – Nevermind [sic] I can't explain it. I'm liable to get myself in trouble if I try.

You know what I wish you'd do for me Me Little One –please. It'll only cost you a quarter. Go down to the beach, sit in one of those photo booths & watch the little light flash 4 times. Please Little One. You do have a cute face you know & its only 25 cents so why don't you take a picture of yourself. Of you – nobody else – just you. O.K.? Now is that asking too much?

You know if I don't make Lance Corporal pretty soon I'm gonna start doing some bitching around this hell-hole. Maybe if I request mass to see the Colonel they'll start thinking twice.

We're not in Phu Bai anymore. We're about 10 miles north of Hue (pronounced 'way'). Tomarrow [sic] we're supposed to go humping into the mountains so I won't be writing for awhile. I do write whenever I get a chance you know. Even though it may not look that way sometimes.

Lots of luck in buying your car & say hello to your folks & sister Cassie for me. Tell Donna hi too. And all your other buddies.

Love, Rock

3 May 67

Dear Me,

So how's everything with you these days? I've been out in the boondocks for the past couple of weeks so that's why I haven't been writing. They brought us mail a couple of times & I got a few letters from you. One was 5 pages long which was kinda nice & one was hand written which I never expected to see again.

Anyway the reason I'm writing is because I'm in a medical ward right now. I guess the only way that you could find out that I was wounded would be for me to tell you myself & that's what I'm doing. The incident happened yesterday morning when a friend of mine stepped on a land mine, wounding 5 of us. Two died on the way to the hospital. A third one is not expected to live. I was the most fortunate of the five thank heavens. Schrapnel [sic] caught me in the ass, back, leg & arm --all on my left side. The most serious being in my ass – sort of tore me a new

ass-hole you might say. I'm only being funny. I wasn't half hurt bad as compared with the others. I have no idea as to whether they sent word to my parents. I would imagine so but you can never tell about the efficiency [sic] of these people. So I don't know whether or not to mention it when I write them or what. I'd hate like hell to tell my mom I was wounded cause it'd scare her half to death.

Oh well enough of that. I got your letter containing the pictures yesterday & what do you mean by I never answer your questions. I weigh about the same as I did when I last saw you – 165-170 lbs. And by the looks of your picture you damn near weigh that much yourself. You've got less than 6 mos. To lose 10-15 lbs cause I wouldn't be caught dead walking down the street with you. When we were in highschool [sic] I always said you'd turn out to look just like your mother & you always said that would never happen. Well if you don't want that to happen you'd best square away

I just read that over & I sounded kind of harsh didn't I? Well I didn't really mean to be. I guess I'm just kinda stiff & sore & it's put me in a bad mood.

I'm gonna close for now cause I half [sic] to go get another penicillin [sic] shot. They don't exactly tickle either.

Guess what – my parents are thinking about taking in a foreign exchange student next fall. I hope its some beautiful blond from Germany or some lovely brunette from Mece. If its an oriental I'll ring its neck.

Love, Rock

Midnight

4-5 May 1967

Dear Me – Little One,

Sometimes when I'm drunk I get silly; sometimes I get moody; sometimes sick; sometimes happy; sometimes careless; sometimes intellectual. Like now, I'm trying to make these letters perfect – but I can't. Sometimes I drink to forget things. Tonight I'm drinking to

forget something & at the same time to understand something. I can't forget in order to understand but then again I can't understand no matter how much I remember. You probably don't know what I'm talking about but I do so maybe, in reality, I'm writing this to myself in order to better comprehend, but sometimes I consider you a part of me (don't ask me to explain) so I'll address it to New York rather than California.

Once again I'm faced with a hypothetical question which everyone tries to answer; which no one can. Once again I question God & my creators. Once again I question His way of choosing. It must have been a childhood belief that the good were praised & the bad were punished. Lance Corporal Charles W. Bricker was a good man. He knew not the meaning of bad. He was always good. He would always be good. I knew the word all too well. I was taught the meaning of bad. Still I practiced it. To be bad is the only way to get ahead in the Corps. In this country to steal is the only way to get clothes on your back, boots on your feet, food in your belly. To kill is the only way to live; to beat is the only way to make some turd listen. Bricker was one of few who didn't believe in this. He used charm, understanding & a ready smile to gain his way. He reminded me of Matt – no enemies only friends. He was a good man, he was to make Corporal this month. The lieutenant loved him. He was one of my most intimate friends.

Charles Bricker is dead. With him are Watson, Cooke, & Patrick. Everyone asks – "why Rizzuti? Someone upstairs must like him, but why him?" Why, why, why. I don't know why but I've got to know. Something's got to tell me. I say something cause nothing human can tell me.

Its raining outside this leaky tent; artillery is firing & enemy mortar rounds are splashing in the mud. Why don't I take cover? Cause I don't give a damn. I don't give a damn about anything.

A record player on the other side of the ward is spitting out 'soul' music. Most everyone else is asleep. My eyes are drowsy. Soon I'll be blowing eyes with the rest.

In about a week you'll probably tear open the enclosure around these mixed of words.

When you've read the words burn the paper they're placed upon. Like I said they were more or less written to me but only a fool would write to himself – only a fool am I.

I've often told you how I feel about you Little One, but I'm not going to tell you anymore. Sometimes you say & do things that piss me off. Mostly you make me happy. I won't distinguish which do which. You're a big girl now. Which reminds me – you're too big. You better stop drinking or something. Do you realize Me, that if you only weighed 100 pounds you'd be one of the most sought after secretaries in Syracuse. But then I don't guess you much care do you? You have some sort of inner fear to express inner feelings. I never told you this but I'm going to now. There have been many nights when I've lain out in ambush under the moon & stars when I've said to myself – "You know what I think I'll do when I get back to the states? I think I'll ask Me if she wants to get married."

I've said that several times but I don't guess I ever will. There are many reasons involved & I won't go into them because you know them as well, if not better, than I. Anyway I'm getting sleepy & I'm probably talking through my hat. I see some truth in what I'm saying but more than likely I'm wrong in saying it – with all foolishness aside though I hope this letter finds you well.

Love, Rock

PS – Of course I don't mind if you take pictures with other guys. On the contrary maybe they understand you better than I do. I think we've been apart too long to know what each one of us is really like. I know the old Me -- & I know her only with the old Rock. I have only a dim view of the older, more mature Me just as I have only a dim view of the older, probably more mature Terry.

Good Night

11 May 67

Dear Me,

How's civilian life? Even if its bad, miliatary [sic] life is worse. They finally let me out of the medical ward after 9 whole days of pure torture. Two shots everyday. God I hate shots.

The only thing worthwhile about the whole mess was that the corpsmen didn't know how to play poker very well. The last two days I was in there I won \$170. That's probably why they kicked me out.

You know, if I was back in the states & I won that much money I'd be happy as hell, but over here money has very little significance. You rarely get a chance to spend it, so winning or losing hundreds of dollars doesn't seem to bother people too much. Me? I hate to lose, so whenever I play poker I cheat. In other words me & a buddy of mine play pardners [sic] & then split the winnings. Playing pardners [sic] in poker is hard to explain so ask one of your friends how it works & you'll see how I won \$170.

Oh, before I forget tell Jessie I haven't been writing him because I lost his address. Send it to me next time you think about it o.k?

My mother wrote & told me that a Marine Sargeant [sic] went over to the house so naturally at the sight of him she had to assume the worst. So whats [sic] she do, she sends me a get well card. My little brother wrote & told me he wishes I hadn't joined the Marine Corps & he says that when he grows up he's not going to be a marine. I've got a smart brother haven't I. My mom says he busted out crying when the sargeant [sic] said I'd been wounded. I guess he watches too much "Combat" or something.

As for that 'hill-taking' you've been reading about, that wasn't our outfit but it took place about 3 miles north of here. I wish you'd stop worrying about every little thing that sounds like my address. The important part of my address is 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn 26<sup>th</sup> marines. If you read something specifically pertaining to 2/26 then you can assume its me OK?

When I get home this fall I'd much rather have a party with just you instead of with everyone, but then again it doesn't really make much difference. I still want to know how come I can't stay at your apartment. I'm sure Donna wouldn't mind. I'll sleep on the sofa, honest! Oh well if you don't want me too I don't care cause I can always stay at some other girl's house (would you believe my grandmother's). I'm staying at your apartment whether you stay there or not. Donna will stay there with me. If you don't believe it ask her.

Well Little One this is my last sheet of paper so take it easy. Lots of luck in the automobile business. Tell Leo to Suck Out.

Love, Rock

15 May 67

My Little Miss Sweetness - Sweetest Girl in the World.

Hi Me,

Just thought I'd write & tell you how much I love you. I'm only kiddin' with you though. You know what? They're sending me on R&R again. Only this time its in-country R&R. In other words I'm going down to the city of DaNang [sic]. It doesn't start until the 8<sup>th</sup> but that's ok. Cause I think they're keeping me in the rear until then. Oh Lordy, don't you know I'm going to have some fun again – eating & drinking & sleeping in a nice clean bed with a roof over it. So how have you been lately. I haven't written you in a few days now but then neither have you so we're even. Are Kate & Carl still getting married in August. If they do wish 'em luck for me. And ask Kate if I get to kiss the bride when I get home since I won't be able to in Aug. I sure hope she says yes. Don't get shook Little One. I'll kiss you too when you get married – (on the cheek). You know how I think I'll greet you this time when I get home? I'm gonna sneak up behind you, whisper in your ear, & pinch you on the ass. You know – just something different for kicks. Then after that I'm gonna take you home & seduce you in your own apartment. Actually I guess you won't have to worry about that too much cause you know I wouldn't really do it. (Not without your approval anyway).

I'm only being funny "Little One," I really can't understand why I'm in such a good mood. Must be because the company just went out on a 2 wk. Operation & I got to stay back. Decent.

When I get paid this June 1<sup>st</sup> I'll have sent home \$750. Thats [sic] almost enough to get married on. Hell, how about it? We can elope tomarrow [sic] & spend a two week honeymoon in Bungfunk, Egypt. I think that's about 35 miles outside of Cairo. We can hit the nightclubs in

Cairo if you like but I hear Bungfung [sic] is a really swinging town. It makes no difference to me though. Make yourself happy. Either place is no. 1 on my list.

Before I forget it send me Sara's address. I've got a couple of buddies who think she's cute & want to write her. As a matter of fact I think she's pretty good looking too & just might write her myself. So send her address & include the spelling of her last name.

So tell me Me how's your boyfriend? And don't tell me you haven't any boyfriends either, cause if you do I'll call you a liar & whip your britches. Oh well I guess some girls just don't have what it takes. But never mind, when I get home I'll be the good semaritan [sic] type & take you out a couple of times. Only if you let me stay at your apartment that is. After all what's a friend among friends?

Well Me this is my last sheet of paper (thank God) so I guess I'll close for now. (heaven knows I don't want to write to you anymore). I'm only kidding Me so you better not take me seriously.

Love, Rock

better known as The "Fabulous Mr. Too Sweet" or "Rock The Lover"

16 May 67

Dear Me,

What can I say? For months I've waited anxiously to hear the words you said in this last letter. I knew they would come sooner or later so I readied a speech for you. Only trouble is, that speech is no longer with me – its unclear. I'm at a loss for words. Only just last night I caught this premonition saying that someday soon Me is going to tell me she loves me, & she's not going to be kidding. As soon as I saw that the letter was your own handwriting I knew it was going to be a winner. Oh princess you've made me the happiest person on earth. But for the first time in my life I can't find the words to express myself. Maybe its just that I'm afraid to express myself. Mainly because its all so much a dream. I can't believe what's happening. Its too unreal.

Me, you never cease to fascinate me. And those poems you included were so appropriate. Especially "Message." I loved it.

Why do you say you're worried about losing me when all the time its been me worrying about losing you. There have been so many nights when I've considered writing you something nasty just to set you free. I had the strangest feeling that you felt sort of obligated to keep on writing to me. I don't know why. I guess because you never revealed the things I so much wanted to hear. I feared that you didn't feel the way I felt. Slowly but surely I was going to make you angry enough to hate me. That was the "tone" you detected. Oh I shudder to think how strangely fate works its ways.

I have this burning desire to reach out & just touch you – ever so lightly, & walk off into a dream world of lights & action. Where nobody cares about the future – just turn loose ones feelings & emotions of the present. I'd like to do things – just you & I – like sit on a park bench, make faces in a mirror, float on a lake, look off the balcony of a Hotel Suite, swim in the air, dance on Broadway and kiss you ever so softly under a streetlight in the wee hours of the morning. I want to dance, oh how I want to dance – me in blue jeans & Indian moccacins [sic] & you in slacks & a sweatshirt – to the sweeping sounds of Henry Mancini & his orchestra. If that wouldn't draw a crowd of tuxedos [sic] & fancy dresses nothing would. I can hear them now. One old man whispers to his decrepit wife "They're crazy." And she returns with "They're in Love."

Yes that's how I feel Me but does it help you to understand? I don't know, I have the feeling I'm losing the ability to communicate with written words. Maybe I never could although I always liked to think I could.

I once felt that I was writing to a wall but now I've discovered that wall to be a woman.

Good Night Me

My Love, Rock

17 May 67

Dear Me,

You know its a funny thing but usually I can go for 3 or 4 days without writing you. Even now when I have absolutely nothing to say I feel the need to write to you. I don't know why. I'm just lonely I guess. Today I got a big brown envelope mailed before the letter I got last night. It scared me at first because I felt you'd returned to the way you were before. It wasn't until I had compared dates that I realized that it was late mail. Me, please don't stop telling me you love me. I keep getting this inner feeling that you were making it all up. It just seems too incredible that you could call Kate & Donna foolish & crazy for getting married & then turn around & go through some fantastic change in your state of mind. Oh please Me – I hope you're not just feeling sorry for me.

I went to the Aid Station this afternoon & they told me my wounds were getting infected. That means I have to start getting shots again. I hate shots – especially when they're in the ass.

I didn't really mean to make fun of you Me by calling you fat. I was trying to make you mad at me. It didn't work though did it? I'm glad. And for your information Miss Milton I already shaved off my mustache. You can see that in the last picture I sent to you.

Tell me something will you Me? This may sound stupid but I want to know. Are we finally going steady? I never could figure out what our relationship was before. I want you to know one thing though. I still don't mind if you go out with other guys. But you best not get serious or I'll break your little neck. And tell your friend Touchi that he had better not get fresh with you or he'll be answering to me. Not that I'm much to answer to but I've got several friends.. You let me know if he tries something – or Frenchi or Weise or any of those other people you keep telling me about. Of course if harmless Leo or Bobby or even Jessie ever ask you out thats [sic] o.k. But don't let them get carried away. Cause you know I'll side with them if anything drastic happens.

I miss you so much. If only you were here. I've got this raggity [sic] little cot here that we could sleep on. Of course it would be a little difficult sleeping side by side as it is rather narrow. However I have a simple solution for that, which I won't go into for the moment.

You keep telling me to answer your question. I can't answer all your questions because this letter would sound ridiculous. I'd have to start a new paragraph every 5 sec. – watch.

Yes I would rather you hand wrote all your letters because [sic] you sound more like yourself. But don't let that stop you from typing them cause if you didn't type them I'd probably never get a letter.

Of course you're good enough to write to. I was only lying when I said I wouldn't be caught dead walking down the street with you.

No there's no truth in any of your dreams. I'm not snotty; I'm not arrogant; & I'm certainly not good looking.

I'm located about 5 mis. North of the city of Hue (pronounced Way) & about 8 miles south of Hill 881 which you've all been reading about. I never get in the way of cameras cause there's never any cameras around to get in the way of.

No I didn't know you were a gambler & unless you know what you're doing, fooling around with the horses can cost you your shirt.

Yes I can believe that Kate & Carl are getting married (say Hello to Carl for me)

No you're not scaring me cause I have no intentions of taking you out west. I hate it out west.

I can't tell someone to promote me. If I could I'd have done so long ago. I think the name Poo is very suitable & I'll continue to call you Little One as long as I wish. Regardless of the fact that you're grown up.

Yes I got the joke. After having to read 3 paragraphs to figure out what the joke was I should get it don't you think.

There, see how stupid my letters would sound if all I did was answer questions. I always answer the important ones so I don't know why I have to answer them all.

How should I know what's happened to Suzie. The only reason she was always so happy & funny & gay all the time was because I was always so happy & funny & gay. Can I help it if

my personality didn't rub off on her for good. Now that I think about it I wrote her a letter wishing her a happy birthday. Maybe that'll perk her up again for a few months. I doubt it though. I think she inwardly hates me. But that's o.k. cause I'm not gonna sweat it.

Well Me I'm kinda tired so I'm gonna take a break for awhile. Take care of yourself & remember I love you.

Love, Rock

PS – Give the inclosed [sic] joke to Leo to show his dad.

18 May 67

Dear Me,

If I were you I'd consider this a treat – me writing you 3 days in a row I mean. Nothing new has happened recently except our company took 21 casualties last night & this morning. Boy I'm glad I wasn't out there. But then you're not interested in that sort of stuff now are you?

You know, it seems that every so many hours I have to take out that letter of yours & read it over again. If I haven't read it 20 times I haven't read it once. That last part that you put in there – where you asked if we could grow up together? Well I think you have it all wrong Me – it's me that's fallen behind. You're much more mature than I am. I'm only mature when it comes to things like common sense. I don't know what its like to have a job & have to budget my time & money. As a matter of fact I doubt that I could even get a job that pays as much as yours (unless it was a back breaking job). You may laugh but I'm serious. Some times it scares me when I stop & realize that I have absolutely nothing going for me – no talents, no nothing. Maybe I'm assuming too much when I say this but do you realize that if we ever got married we'd have to pull together 100% just to make ends meet. I probably shouldn't have said that Me but I did. The way I look at it, if you love me the way you say you do & I love you, everything will be alright [sic] – just wait & see.

I'm not going to say anymore for the time being because I'm more than likely already getting myself into trouble.

Back to the actual subject [sic] of being immature – all my buddies think I'm crazy cause I cheat, lie, theive [sic], fight, argue & do other little things like drink that could get me busted. They all ask if I was the same in highschool [sic]. So you see Me I'm still a little kid at heart. The only thing this place has taught me is how much more to appreciate the things around. That much I've learned Me. I've learned to appreciate the beauty around, the help a kind word or action or even thought can accomplish. But most of all I've learned what it means to be a body – a whole body – alive. I've learned the value of life over death. When you're dead Me, you're nothing. You're a fond memory soon forgotten. When you're alive you're something, you're somebody. You can help others. You can stand up & be counted. That's why I ask this one favor Me. If I ever die all I ask is that you remember me as a good chapter in your life. Don't prolong your grievances. All that will do is shorten your next or possibly even last chapter. You've got to get out & live. You've got to carry out the cycle of life.

I'm going off into another land again Me so please bear with it.

Me I wish, I truly wish you were a psychologist [sic] cause sometimes I wonder what's wrong with me. Why do I write so much about something & say absolutely nothing? Be good  
Love, Rock

20 May 67

Dear Me,

I don't know what you're doing to me Me but you're giving me the impression that you think I'm crazy or something. I'm not really you know. You seem to be all upset over me considering myself bad. Either I'm not too good at clarifying myself or you're just completely misunderstanding me. You see Me whenever I lose a friend over here I compare myself with him. I compare myself with what I know & have seen of him & I compare myself with his past which I learned through many bull sessions with him. And it just seems to me that everyone has accomplished so much more than I. Everyone has so much more going for him back in the states, & in some instanteses [sic] so much more waiting for him like a wife & a child he's never

seen. Do you understand what I'm saying so far? Anyway when I see one of these boys get hurt I can't help but ask myself certain questions: Questions which can't be answered. My dad & I used to argue along these same lines. He used to always tell me not to trouble myself with such nonsense [sic]. I don't know why I do trouble myself but its just that sometimes I get so wrapped up with hatred that I can't help but question the Lord. I don't know it just seems to me that everything that was ever drilled into me as a child is in complete conflict with the way things really are.

I think it all started when I was about 14 years old. Before that I always had a deffinate [sic] belief in God. But one day in General Science class Mrs. Putnam started talking about the theory of evolution. I got so upset over the context of the matter that I walked out of the class saying aloud (mostly to myself) "whatever happened to Adam & Eve." Since that day I've waged an inward battle with myself trying to find out whether there is or is not such a thing as God. When I was 16 Nanette Shovea spent about 6 hrs. (8 PM -- 2 AM) on her front porch trying to convince me that there was a god. She succeeded [sic] – but for only about 1 month because on July 2 Matt drowned. Once again my mind was in a haze. I figured that if there was a God he wouldn't be heartless enough to take the life of my best friend. Therefore evolution reigned over Adam & Eve. Next a lifetime girl friend (by girl friend I mean good friend) named Sherry from Rome – we'd known each other since kindergarten. I can still remember writing her love notes in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade & passing them across the class to her. Anyway I knew she was deeply religious minded so I talked with her about my problem. She had me believing in God before I left her house. Three months later my favorite uncle (age 32) was burned to death when his brand new Thunderbird collided with a tractor trailer hauling nitro. His wife was pregnant with their first child. They were so happy. No – there couldn't be a god – he wouldn't do such a thing. When I was in boot camp I met a boy from Minnianapolis [sic] named Craig Turgeon. He did the best job of anyone in convincing me that there truly was a God. I honestly thought I'd found my answer. Then I came over here. I'm sure you know what happened then. I lost close friends left & right. So you see Me most of my problem has been of a religious aspect. For years I've sought

for an answer but can't find one. I want so much to believe in God but I just can't. He's too cruel at times. I haven't been to confession since Mrs. Putnam's science class. I vowed I'd never go again until I believed in God.

I don't think you ever knew any of this did you Me? Maybe I never should have told you. If you'll read over any of my letters which make things seem like I'm a little off my rocker you'll almost always find that my screwed up questions are concerned with God & life over death. All I'm really asking is that if there is a God how does he make his decision concerning who should live & who should go. If I could just find the answer I think I could solve my problem. So you see Me you ask if I'll let you help me. Sure I'll let you help me, but I honestly don't think you can. If you did come up with an answer somewhere along the line I'd come up with a loophole & find a question for your answer – starting the whole thing over. I once thought that if I ever went to see a priest I'd find my answer but I never had the nerve & I always felt that I'd walk away unsatisfied because I couldn't possibly talk to a priest the way I can to you or a close friend. Do you have any idea what I'm talking about Me? And you'd better not get a brain storm & show this letter to some priest & ask his opinion either.

Oh well I wrote all this mainly to try & make you understand that in reality its not that I consider myself bad so much as the fact that I consider many of my friends a litter better than me. Anyway I'm gonna get off the subject for now because its almost useless talking about it. I hope you're well.

Love, Rock

24 May 67

Dear Me,

Please answer me one question ok? What are you trying to do – make a mental case out of me? If you are you're doing an excellent job. I swear I'm going out of my mind. First you say you miss me, then you say you don't really miss me. Next you say you love me then you come out with "I think I do anyway." Then to top it all off, & I quote "I am so lucky. I think." And

what makes you think I don't like to kiss you very often. I enjoyed kissing you, mainly though because for a long time you didn't know how. I must say that last summer you displayed a marked improvement. Had a lot of practice didn't you? I wonder what this fall will show. Probably an expert huh?

Anyway Miss Milton you'd best not be making any of those suggestive trips to N.Y. or I'll ring your little neck. And stop drinking with older men. What's the scoop on you anyway? You know that young girls aren't supposed to accompany older, & in many case married, men. Are you still trying to make me jealous. And why do these men ask you out on trips in the first place. You must be flirting with them or something. I'm serious though Me you better never make a trip with any of those guys (business or no business) cause if you do you can hang it up. And tell your Mr. Fowler & Santini that they'd best leave you alone & stop putting ideas in your head or I'll rock their teeth for em when I get home. Do you understand. All I can say is that you'd better start using your head cause no man asks a girl to go swimming unless he has something on his mind.

By the way I just about died laughing at that article concerning sex. I gave it to one of my buddies to send home to his wife. I wonder what she's gonna say. You really didn't have to send it to me ya know. It was meant for you.

I just added another song to my most Favorite list, "I believe that for every drop of rain that falls, a flower grows." I'm sure you've heard it.

So you finally read an article on the 26<sup>th</sup> mars. I didn't think anybody knew we were out here. We're always out in the boondocks somewhere. That was us you read about & the casualty list was much greater than 2 dead & 80 wounded. One of the boys who died was in my squad. I didn't really know him that well as he just got over here in Feb. & they didn't put him in our squad until the end of April. Just remember one thing Me. We may be losing men but the V.C. lose at least 4 to every 1 of ours. Its not worth it to me but statistics wize [sic] it is. And another thing please remember to always include 26<sup>th</sup> mars in my address. Twice now you've forgotten & it took the letter over a month to get here. The latest one I'm referring to was a big brown

envelope with extra paper in it for me to write on. It was mailed Apr. 18<sup>th</sup> & I got it the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June [sic]. Do I ever leave Billings St. off your address?

Me, why do you want to throw a party for me when I get home? You know I'll be all embarrassed [sic]. After all I don't know your friends anymore. What I mean is – I know who they are but I don't really know them anymore. Besides if you throw a party for me everybody's gonna ask me questions about this place & I don't want to talk about. I hate it and everything about it so I'd just as soon forget it as soon as possible. You can ask me questions though cause I can talk to you & make you understand. In fact in that late letter I just got I think I remember you asking about the Viet Nameese people. Well Me there's so many things I could tell you that I'd just as soon not take the time. Maybe when I get home. I'll tell you one thing. Their ain't a one of them I trust. Not a one. Especially including the women & childred [sic]. And if you're wondering whether I've ever killed any of them – yes I have. I feel sorry for it in a way but I'm not exactly ashamed of it because in my eyes they were all V.C. I don't think I've ever talked to you about it befor [sic] but I think that you could probably understand what I'm saying. Its some sort of funny feeling that comes over you when one of your buddies gets hurt. It tends to knot up inside you & make you want to kill everything in sight. Kind of like revenge I guess. There was a time when we recieved [sic] fire from a village & the order came down to kill all the people & burn the homes & crops. I walked into a hooch & an elderly man was sitting at a table. Didn't want to do it but something kept saying shoot, shoot, so I shot & the man flew out of his chair. Then his wife came running out at me & started to yell. She reached for a knife like tool & kept yelling – I pulled the trigger. She was at least 7 mos. pregnant Me. Then this 2 year old little girl kept screaming. I couldn't stand it but she kept on & on. Screaming. I couldn't do it but something kept saying -- its [sic] an order, its an order. I shot. I don't even remember pulling the trigger but suddenly the screaming stopped. I wanted to cry – there was so much blood but I turned & ran. Sometimes at night I can still hear that little girl. I'll never forget it as long as I live. And then people wonder why we want to come home. I want to leave & forget this country ever existed. And still you hear the boys back home bragging about how rough they had it.

Those are the ones who had it knocked over here. The office pinkies, mail orderlies, druck [sic] drivers & mechanics, etc. They're the braggarts. You never hear a grunt bragging unless he saw very little action. The Army, the Navy, the Air Force – always bragging & bringing home their little souvenirs. Tell Jessie not to worry about coming over because more than likely he'll be afloat on some ship just outside DaNang [sic] or Saigon in the harbor. Tell him there's very little chance of getting hurt in either of those two cities. It makes me mad Me, the whole thing just tears me up. Sometimes I get so scared I don't think I'll ever make it home. And then other times I just say to hell with it all. I don't give a damn one way or another.

Anyway I've said too much already so I think I'll close for the night. Be good

Love, Rock

PS – How do you put up with me Me

26 May 67

158 Days

Dear Me,

I getting short Me. Only 158 days to go. Not too short though cause two guys here with me are slowly drinking themselves to death mainly because one only has 10 days left & the other only has 66 days. Oh god I wish I was going home in 10 days. By the time you get this letter he'll only have about 4 days to go. I wish you could see him Me. He's all smiles & laughs. He's the happiest guy in the world. You'd never know that only yesterday he got a Dear John from his girl. For some reason it didn't bother him. He was so close to going home I guess it just didn't register or something. Anyway I wish you could see him. He's beaming with joy.

Our battalion's getting the shit kicked out of them Me. Word has it we have to back up & re-group. In other words go to the rear & wait for reinforcements. That could take a month or two. I certainly hope so. Sometimes you even get to go to Okinawa to re-group but I doubt that we'll be that lucky.

So how's everything going Me? Uh, oh. I just found out that we're going to move again. Probably to Phu Bai. It seems like I always end up in Phu Bai for some reason.

I'm sorry but I think I'd better close so I can pack. Be good. I miss you.

Love, Rock

28 May 67

156 Days

Dear Me:

I just got your baby pictures. You were kinda cute in the one with the goat (more so than the goat anyway). But that one with Dickson has got to go. You looked just like your sister. And the one with Bonnie was too much. I'd forgotten all about her. Kinda brings back old memories. I didn't know her very well but I remember she was funny as hell.

Everything is pretty much the same around here. I'm still in the rear although they're trying to get me out into the field. I'm stalling though cause I'm going on R&R the 8<sup>th</sup>. We didn't move out like we were supposed to but I would imagine we'll be going any day now. Where to – I still don't know.

I found out something rather interesting today. Did you know that it was the 26<sup>th</sup> Mars that put up the flag on Iwo Jima? And you know something else? If they were to send me home by the 27<sup>th</sup> of Oct. then I've only got 152 days left. That's the day I should be home because its the day I got here but if I know the Narine [sic] Core [sic] I won't get home before Nov. It must sound funny to you – me talking about coming home. But it seems that once someone gets to 180 days they start counting. When you get below 100 you're called a shorttimer. That means you've only got about 3 mos. Left so its time to be extra careful. I'm usually extra careful all the time.

Well Me it seems I'm in a predicament. Everyone wants to go to sleep & they don't want the light on so I must close. Have fun.

Love, Rock

2 June 67

Dear Me,

It's been a little while since I've written you hasn't it? Well its like this; I'm back down in Phu Bai again thus I've been drunk for the past 3 nights in a row – so drunk that I just couldn't muster up enough energy to write you.

I called my mom the other day on a ham set & all she did was cry for the whole 3 minutes so it was all one big farce. I guess I should have never made the call but my buddies talked me into it. I was gonna call you at work but I figured that your boss wouldn't have liked the idea of accepting the charges. I would have payed [sic] for them of course but that's beside the point.

Well Me the future's looking up a little better. It seems that 2/26 is finally coming to the rear here in Phu Bai due to an excess in casualties to regroup. There's no telling how long we'll be here.

I've been doing a lot of serious thinking over the past month about what I'm gonna due once I get out of the service. I'm gonna go back to school believe it or not. They're passing a new G.I. Bill which pays the recipient \$150 per month (about \$175 for married men) for approximately 5 ½ years. Believe it or not, with \$150 each month, a student can go a long way in college. Plus with whatever I manage to save between now & then. When I get back from Viet Nam I should have about \$1300. There's only one draw back which bothers me the most – I'll be an old man before I graduate. I don't get out of this green machine until 1970. By the time I graduated I'd be 27 yrs old. Do you realize how much I'm following in my father's footsteps. He was 30 when he graduated. Its a bitch Me, but it seems its the only thing I can do. The thing that humors me the most is that If you'll recall I always used to tell you in Word Hist. class that I'd marry you on June 21<sup>st</sup> 1970. Strange that I should remember that now. You know what I'd do if I were you Me? I'd pack my bags & travel. I'd find some young stable man, fresh out of college settle down as a secretary & live a nice comfortable live [sic]. I know what it was like for my mother. Struggling night after night, year after year helping my dad with his studdies [sic]

until he finally made it. With me as a baby on her hands at that. And then she still had to work for 2 or 3 more years before my Dad decided he could support the family alone. To be honest I don't think you'd enjoy that type of life. For some reason my mom took pride in struggling with my Dad in financial problems etc.

I just wish you'd sit down some night Me & think about things. You're 20 yrs old, a woman, & you've got a mind of your own. As much as I love you I'd hate to see you run around with a possible loser. You've got to be sure of yourself.

And you talk of my assets being that I've been places, traveled etc. Me they're of no use. Think about it. What good is having seen foreign countries, in a civilian job. And that's what I want – a civilian job. I've got to get out of the service. Its no life for me – I can't take it. I have to be free – to call it quits when I feel like it; to open my mouth when I see fit. The Marine Core is basically no better than the worst of dictatoships [sic]. They tell you when to eat, when to sleep, & practically when to shit.

I'm not trying to get rid of you Me. On the contrary I want you in the worst way. But I don't want either of us to get hurt before its too late either. Especially you. With me – to get hurt has little significance anymore. I've learned to take a hurt. I've lost so much over here and gained so little that it just doesn't make much sense. I've got to go so be good.

Love, Rock

9 June 67

Dear Me:

I'm at China Beach down here in da nang [sic] right now on R&R & you have no idea how beautiful it is out here. I'm sitting at a picnic table facing the Ocean. There's about 50 kids out there swimming & I think I'll join them soon. The water is outstanding.

They've got a huge restaurant & you wouldn't believe how delicious the food is. You know, yesterday, while I was still in Phu Bai I saw 2 American women. Two days before that I saw one in Dong Ha taking movie pictures. Naturally being so handsome I followed that camera

whereever [sic] it went. And then again this morning I saw an American girl about 21 yrs. old. I asked her her name & whaere [sic] she lived but I forgot it now – Ann something from Calif.

I haven't written you in quite a while have I? I'm sorry – no excuse. I got 3 letters from you the other day. I wasn't really yelling at you was I Me? I didn't mean to yell, only to correct.

I'm up for Lance Corporal again this month. I've been up every month since January but I guess they don't like me. The Co. is back from Operation Hickory. You may have read about it – in Con Tien. We're living in Phu Bai now. I guess we'll have to regroup there because we lost so many men.

I wish you were here right now so we could go fool around in the water & lie in the sand. I don't think you could take the hot sun though. Although its not hot right now because its still morning. And By the way Miss Milton I'm not black as the Ace of spades. In fact I'm lighter than I've ever been. The only part of me that is fairly tanned is my face & arms. I can't take the chance of getting my back tanned cause if it burned & I had to go on patrol with a pack I'd be in great pain.

Well honey I'm fixing to go buy some beer & then go swimming. I'll probably write you again tomarrow [sic]. In the meantime remember I Love you.

Love, Rock

Its evening now & since I hadn't sealed the envelope yet I decided to write you somemore [sic]. I'm glad to see that you finally got yourself a car. But, my dear girl, if you think you're gonna cart me all around when I get home you're crazy, cause I refuse to ride with a girl. Or did you forget? It just doesn't look right Me. A guy can't sit next to the girl cause he feels out of place. And if he sits by the door – that ain't right either. So if you don't mind I'll do the driving. In fact even if you do mind I'm still gonna do the driving.

Oh by the way – I never said you couldn't go out with Ronald. You can go out anytime, anywhere & with anyone. All I ask is that you don't go picking older or married men. By older I mean 24 on up. Men that are still running around at that age are only after one thing & if you don't believe me go ahead an go out with about a 25 yr old bachelor & see what happens. Oh

can't you get it through your head that I'm worried about you. I've been around Me, and when a guy picks up (I shouldn't say picks up in your case) but when a guy manages to get a date with a 20 yr old girl he's gonna try something. Believe me Me I know what I'm talking about. All I'm saying is that I don't want anyone hurting you. Of course I don't mean everyone but a good proportion. And don't worry I won't try anything. You're bigger than I am & you're liable to pounce on me. You always were afraid to let me near you though weren't you? I never could understand that. I'd never hurt you. Use your head a minute Me & think about a married man. What's he been used to every night in relation to his wife? Ok. Now he takes you someplace – you Miss Milton – do you think he's gonna settle for less than what he gets from his wife? Never happen. So please Me, Im [sic] concerned. Don't mess around with married men unless you know what you're doing. And don't go getting me wrong either. I'm not saying you've been messing with men. This is just the advice of a boy to his girl. ok? So now you know why I get all shook up when Tucci & his cronies decide to invite you on business trips. You know I've only got 144 days left before I can leave this hell hole. Maybe even less. I can't wait to look into those sparkling green eyes of yours. When you see me though you'll probably get mad cause more than likely you'll be out having a good time & all of a sudden up pops the ol' "ROCK." Boy will you be in a state of shock. And the only reason why you don't want me to surprise you is because you're afraid I might catch you doing something you shouldn't. You're not kidding me any.

Well Me I really must go so take care.

Love, Rock

Good Night 'Little One'

12 June 67

Dear Me:

How's everything going? It's been so long since I've written you a nice long letter. I wrote you a letter while I was at China beach but I didn't get a chance to mail it until this

morning. I bought me another camera; a Yashica Electro 35 mm. I just sent you a role of film to be developed. Do me a favor would you please. Send the pictures back. You can keep any of me but please send back the ones of other guys because I promised to give them to em. You can keep any landscape scenes.

You know two days ago I got a couple of letters from you. I stuck them in my pocket & then later when I got to thinking about it I thought I'd already read them. It wasn't until this afternoon that I noticed that they hadn't been opened yet. So Warren spread the word that we're engaged huh? No big thing Me. Maybe someday things will work out & we will be engaged. Of course you won't have to worry about that because I'd probably be too scared to ask you for quite a while. Hell, I used to have a hard enough time asking you to go steady let alone engaged.

You know, I wrote all that yesterday & I'm only just now getting back to it – tonight. I got a couple of letters from you today. Herb got yours today too. And by the way Smartie he let me read it.

And Me you don't have to ask me if its alright [sic] to go out with Ronald. I don't mind. But, Miss Primp when I get home you'd best not consider going out with anyone other than me. And as for making that trip to New York if you get the chance – go ahead. But please be careful Me OK?

I'll be sending you another role of film soon – color. I don't know how much it costs to develop them so if it gets kinda expensive let me know & I'll send a small money order to you.

I'm glad you finally found out what kind of ring I got you. I knew it was a star sapphire [sic] but I also could have sworn it was blue.

Say Me if I were say a few words on a tape would you have the means (a recorder) to play it back.

Well Me, its kinda late so I guess I'll close for now. Have fun & for heavens sakes quit worrying about me so much. I'm doing alright [sic]. I've only got about 139 days to go.

Love & miss you, Rock

P.S. – Do me a big favor will ya Me? Send me something – send me all your loving. Good Night

Its the 15<sup>th</sup> now. I'm sending you a tape soon. I hope you like it despite the fact that I got a little carried away.

23 June 67

Dear Me:

I'm so sorry I haven't written in so long but after I got back from R&R they sent me out into the field until yesterday. Then last night I got so drunk I couldn't hold the pen straight when I started a letter to you.

This afternoon they promoted me at last. I only had 9 mos. as a PFC but that's alright [sic]. Herb made Corporal. I'm a Lance Corporal, or E-3. That means an extra \$20 per month. I hope I make Corporal before I come home. Don't ask me why because I'm not going to tell you.

Anyway to set your mind at ease I was never in Hawaii & never in Calif. I just happened to have those post cards so I thought I'd be funny. I figured you'd catch on.

I'm a fire team [sic] leader now. That means I have charge over 3 other men. If anything happens to them they're my responsibility. It doesn't seem like much of a job but actually if you think about it the lives of 3 men are in my hands.

I still haven't mailed that tape to you yet. You probably wouldn't want to hear it anyway will you?

Oh well its getting kind of late but I have to get up at 3:45 tommorrow [sic] morning so I better sign off.

Take care of yourself & I'll try to write again real soon.

Love, Rock

27 June 67

Dear Me,

Hi, how's everything going? It seems I've been so busy lately I can't even find time to breathe. Then a few minutes ago I just felt I had to write you for some reason. I guess because I miss you so much. You know Me you've got to stop mentioning my name around everyone else or somebody's liable to go gunning for me when I get home.

I got your picture yesterday but I can't understand why you had so many shirts on while everyone else was wearing short sleeves. Are you trying to put me on again Miss Milton? So Donovan works at the point huh? Tell her hello for me next time you see her.

We haven't been getting our mail again for some reason so I haven't heard from you so much of late. Maybe today. I got a letter from ol' Leo but he didn't have much to say for some reason. I sent that card to Sara so you'll be hearing about that soon enough I guess.

Ol' Herb got in a fight last night & got the shit kicked out of him. Speaking of fights Floyd Patterson was in the area just about an hour ago. I went to listen to him speak in the messhall. He ain't really too big. As a matter of fact he ain't really too bright either.

I sure do miss you Me. Why don't you come and see me this weekend. We'll go parking on a tank or something – that is if its alright [sic] with you. I've only got 4 mos. To go before I get home. We won't have to go parking though. You can sit by me on the couch in your apartment. I still say I'm going to stay at your apartment. You may not let me but Donna will. Just for one night OK? Please. There, I knew you'd give your consent if I kept hounding you long enough. And I wish you wouldn't worry so much. You can sleep in your own room – I'll sleep in Donna's, if she says its alright [sic]. I hope she has a double bed. I'm only kidding about all this. I'll rent my own apartment & have all kinds of parties & orgies etc. And if you think you can stay at my apartment you're crazy.

Me, I want to ask you something important. How would you feel if I extended for overseas duty – say someplace like Japan or the Phillapeans [sic]? You see I'm trying to scheme & conive [sic] a way to keep from coming to Viet Nam again. I would get my 30 days leave this fall, mybe [sic] more, but instead of being in Calif, or the East Coast I'd be over seas somewhere.

"Dear Me," by Terry P. Rizzuti

Would that bother you much? I have to know whether you feel my leaving again would effect us in any way because I'm really considering it.

Well honey I've got a few things to do so I'm gonna close for now. In the meantime always remember your A.B.C.'s (always be cool)

Love, Rock

29 June 67

Dear Me,

I sent you that tape today. If you laugh at it you'd best prepare for a tongue lashing. After all the frustrations I went through thinking of things to say you'd better not laugh because it wasn't funny. You better listen to it alone too because its embarrassing in a way. In fact if you think you're gonna laugh maybe there's no sense in listening to it at all.

I went out on an ambush last night & all it did was rain all night. God was I ever soaked. When I get home if it so much as drizzles you can forget about me going anywhere because I refuse to get wet unless its absolutely necessary.

Do you remember the colored boy in those pictures you developed for me. He was one of my best friends. We called him Baltimore. Anyway his company was almost completely wiped out. I've been praying all that hes [sic] alright [sic]. He's got a kid he's never even seen. I sure hope he's alright [sic]. You know he was my team leader for 7 mos. & for seven mons. he kept me alive.

I'm awfully sorry this is so short but I don't feel so good today for some reason. Anyway you're always telling me to write & let you know I'm O.K. Well I'm O.K. & I hope you're the same. I gotta quit.

Love, Rock

4 July 67

Dear Me,

Not too much has been happening lately except that they seem to be getting a big charge out of humping us all over these boondocks. Last night we patrolled from 7 o'clock until 5 o'clock in the morning with no sleep. You have no idea how tired & sore I am today. These people kill me. They seem to think we're some kind of new breed animals. If I had the chance I'd probably tell the Commandant of the Mar. Corps that he & his Corps can both kiss my ass. The only thing is they'd probably make me a Private again plus give me a little brigg [sic] time which means that much longer in the Corps. And I'll never give them that satisfaction.

So how have you been lately? I haven't heard from you very much but I guess thats [sic] because I haven't been writing huh? My parents are taking a 4 week vacation in New York pretty soon. My Mom told me she hated to go without me, so I told her that if she could figure out a way to take me along I'd be much obliged.

Remember I told you I sent that card to Sara. Well don't get excited when you see the Happy Birthday I wrote on it. I didn't mean it to be the Birthday you're thinking of. I meant it to be the New Birth after graduation so try to explain that to her if you can understand it yourself.

Well they just told us that we'll be doing the same thing tonight that we did last night. I'm sorry Me but I just lost my appetite for writing. Maybe I'll be in a better mood tomarrow [sic] so until then bear with it. I'm glad to hear you're losing weight but why must you lose 20 lbs to look stacked? How much weight had you gained anyway? I swear I always said you'd end up like your Mom. I hope you prove me wrong like you always said you would.

Love, Rock

10 July 67

Dear Me:

Hi – How are you? I was just wondering because you haven't written in a couple of weeks which isn't like you. Are you alright [sic]? Did you get into a car wreck or something? If you're simply trying to make me mad you're doing a damn good job. Of course if this is the royal shaft I'd like to know that too. It just isn't like you Me so please clarify the situation.

Well I'll be – this letter started out pretty interesting but guess what happened? Someone just brought in the mail & there was a letter from you. I don't know why I worry because there's always a legitimate explanation [sic].

Anyway, I really can't explain the moods you get into. Maybe you should just place me in the back part of your mind for the next couple of months. And in the mean time go out with other guys & enjoy yourself. As for you always making fun of other peoples weddings [sic] all I can say is – you're jealous!! You're losing all your freinds [sic] in wedlock so what do you do? Instead of accepting the inevitable you cry about it. I already told you one time that your day will come. So why don't you sit back, have fun, & wait for your day to be a princess. It'll come.

And as for extending for overseas duty don't worry about it cause I changed my mind. I've only got 113 days to go & I'm coming home then. So I'll see you this November.

I hope you got my tape Me, & I especially hope you listened to it alone.

Well I'm sorry Me but I have to go somewhere so please take care & how's your diet coming? You better get down to, at the most, 105 lbs.

Love, Rock

PS – God you don't know how worried you had me.

12 July 67

Dear Me,

I'll have to make this short but sweet because I guess we're going out shortly.

I got another letter from you today. You don't know how good it is to have you writing again. I certainly missed you that week you skipped – it seemed like a year. So you finally got my tape huh. I'm glad that's over with – its too embarrassing. And you're sending me one back. I sure hope I can manage to borrow a recorder when it gets here. Herb says hi back to you.

So you've finally agreed to let me stay at your apartment huh. Well, to tell you the truth, I probably won't stay but we'll see when the time comes. I'll probably be staying at Leo's house & I

don't think I could stand spending all night in your room while you were right next door. I'd go crazy for sure. And if I know you you wouldn't help matters any.

I've got 111 days left & then I'll be home. I probably will fly but I won't let you pick me up at the airport because I'll be in uniform & I don't want you to see me. You have no idea how much I hate this green machine & the only reason why I'll wear that damn uniform is because it'll give me military [sic] rates on the plane.

Well we're gonna be moving out in a few minutes so take care of yourself.

Love, Rock

15 July 67

Dear Me:

Hi! I got your tape yesterday & I must admit you certainly don't know very much about tape recording. I don't think you realized it but the first side only had 3 complete songs on it. "Sonny" didn't record except for the tail end. "Crying" was missing the first part. If you ever do another tape listen to it so you'll know whether it turned out or not. Everybody thinks you've got a sexy voice. Boy do you have them fooled.

And you best get back on your diet cause I want you to look trim. When you get down to 100 lbs I'll let you get off your diet. OK?

I'll try to send you another tape pretty soon; as soon as we can get some batteries for the tape recorder any way. Its too bad it didn't all turn out cause I just loved hearing you talk. And what makes you think I have an accent? I haven't any idea what you're talking about. What kind of accent do you mean Me? Southern, VietNameese [sic] or what?

I have another picture to send you although it isn't a very good one. Oh well, I would imagine none of them really are. It was taken 2 months ago. Oh before you embarrass me that's not my underwear sticking out its a bandage I had wrapped around me to better hold the dressing on the wound in my back. You probably didn't quite understand that last sentence did you?

Herb got a big kick out of that song 'Dianne.' He wants to know what museum of old time hits you got it from. I must say it does sound as though it was published in 1919.

I wish you'd quit worrying about me – I'm quite alright [sic]. When the shit hits the fan I'll be sure to let you know.

My Mom's at my grandmother's house you know. You ought to pick up Leo or Bobby & go see her. I think they know where she lives. Anyway its on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in Rome.

Well believe it or not I've gotta go take a shower so I think I'd better close. Say hello to everyone. Tell Sara that I'm extremely impressed about her crying over my tape. At least she appreciates the hardships I went through to talk on that damn machine.

Well Me quite a few hours have passed sinse [sic] I was able to continue this letter which accounts for the change in pens. I'd better close for now. I'll write again as soon as I get a chance.

Take care of yourself Little One

Love, Rock

18 July 67

Dear Me,

Hi honey – How's everything going? I got a couple of real sweet letters the past couple of days from you. I'm glad you feel the way you do. It makes me feel good. But what makes you think that I'd come home & not care less about you? You must be crazy Me. I love you, & when I get home I'll prove it to you. I don't exactly know how but I'll damn sure try hard enough. And by the way Me I don't think I'll stay at your apt. It would only cause you too much embarrassment. People might get crazy notions & we can't have that now can we. I'll probably stay at Leo's. You know I'll actually get to celebrate my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday while I'm on leave.

Just out of curiosity Me – if we ever got married how many kids would you like to have. You know there always is that possibility. I'd make you stand on a one foot platform at the altar

though so's you'd look more my size. Maybe I shouldn't talk about these things huh? You don't seem to like the idea

Do you know what we're gonna do when I get home? We're going to just sit some place peaceful & talk & talk – for hours even. I know you can do it Me. I have so many things I'd like to say to you but I don't dare cause, well just because.

We just got back from the field early this morning & they held a beer call at 9 o'clock. Well you know me – instead of breakfast I thought beer would do better. Well this early in the morning 3 beers was enough to foul up my dope. I can't hardly even see straight which accounts for this stupid hand writing. It hasn't fouled up my thinking. On the contrary I'm more open-minded while under the influence.

Anyway I don't have 99 days I have 105 days. I wish it was 99. I'm getting short I know that. I just hope nothing happens during the next 3 mos. Nothing big that is.

Well Me some funky-assed Sargeant [sic] just decided to stick me on a shit detail so I guess I'd better close.

You take care ya hear & don't let nobody push around or they'll have to answer to me. Be good

Love, Rock

20 July 67

103 Days

Dearest Me,

I received 4 of the sweetest letters from you just recently. Now I feel guilty for sending you that nasty little note.

As for satisfying your curiosity I think I could put up with you day in & day out, forever even. But you'd best lose some weight cause I can be terrible on that subject. If you don't believe it ask my sister Thea. I used to make her cry. But it was for her own good & now she's looking 100% better.

Besides Miss Me Milton sounds a lot better than Mrs Me Rizzuti – don't you agree? A french [sic] first name & Italian Last name just don't seem to match up right.

Anyway that's a touchy subject with you so I'll start on something new. You know I had the weirdest dream last night. I dreamt [sic] that you & I were alone in your apt. when suddenly I was overcome by some ungodly passionate desire for you so I left. I couldn't stand it no more. Anyway I made it out onto the street when you came tearing out behind me. I stopped & one little ol' tear rolled from your left eye all the way down your face & fell onto my arm. It looked so sweet as we turned around & walked back indoors. Thats [sic] when I woke up though so I can't tell you what happened after that. You'll have to use your imagination. It was just like a movie Me. Which reminds me have you ever seen the movie "Butterfield Eight?" It was pretty good.

Purvis answered your letter yesterday. He knows I'm mad too cause he said something in that letter which I didn't like. I almost smashed him in the mouth but I just said to hell with him if that's what he thinks of you. Anyway it involved a little question which he asked you & then said to ask me. Well don't bother asking cause I'll just ignore it. He knows I felt like killing him yesterday. I can't help wondering what he'd have said if I decided to write Dianne & then say something like that.

Don't get me wrong I didn't read his letter to you. Its just that he showed me that one part.

You know something must be going wrong with me Me. It seems I've developed an awful temper. And you know I never used to hardly ever fight. But lately the slightest things rub me the wrong way. I hope it goes away before I get home, or somebody's liable to beat me up.

I'm running out of things to say so maybe I'd better close for now. I'm convinced that I won't be able to stay at your apt. cause my dream is liable to come true & I'd have to leave anyway. It would all be too embarrassing you know. What do you think? Be good

All my Love, "The Count"

PS – I never did tell you about my Italian royalty did I? If I were living in Italy I'd be known as count Rizzuti III. Honestly. My grandfather told me that several years ago.

20 July 67

Dear Little One,

I'm afraid I won't be able to write for quite awhile. All I know is that we're going out for 5, 10, 15 or 20 days. I'm not exactly sure how long. Anyway if you don't get any mail its because I can't write not because I don't want to. Just remember two things – be good & I love you –very, very much. I can't write any longer so good night for now.

All My Love, Rock

93 Days

30 July 67

Dear Me:

Its been a little while again hasn't it? Oh well, don't say I didn't forwarn [sic] you this time. All we did was a lot of walking for over a week -- & what did we get out of it – zilch.

Last night I got to feeling kinda good & ended up falling asleep in the wrong rack. Don't worry I wasn't there very long before its rightful owner came along & kicked me out. 'oh for the sake of rude awakenings.'

You've sure been rewarding me with a lot of nice letters lately. You're sweet. By the way, ol' Purvis has developed a slight interest in Sara. Anyway he says he sent a picture to you to show Sara so tell her that if she thinks anything of him that she'd best not be going with anyone this fall cause he's just liable to show up in Sherrill.

Would you believe that I'm just starting this after nearly ½ the day has gone by. I'm sending you another picture & I want you to be especially careful not to lose it. You see that ugly Mexican biting his lip on my left – well he happens to be one of my best friends. We've been together for 10 mos. Now & he's going home tomarrow [sic]. Gosh he sure is happy. In fact he's so happy he makes me sad. Anyway please hang on to it & show it to me when I get home O.K.

I just got the damn thing stuck on a sheet of paper. Damn it it looks like hell. Look at my watch  
-5:30.

Well Me I really don't have too much more to say for some reason except that you'd best  
get back on your diet & shoot for 100 lbs. By the way how much do you weigh? If you don't tell  
me I'm going to assume that its over 120.

I gotta go. Honest

Love, Rock

7 Aug 67

Hi Princess,

I've already written you once today but for some reason I feel the need to talk to someone  
& you're the only one I can turn to. I don't know exactly what's bothering me but I'm scared stiff.  
I'm so scared my hands shake whenever I hold them up & look at them. I've only got 84 days  
left. Me, 84 days is like 84 years. I swear it is. September first we're supposed to move out.  
Word has it – North, DMZ. There's thousands of them up there Me, thousands of them. And I'll  
probably have to spend close to two months up there. Do you realize the odds against me  
surviving 2 months in the DMZ? The odds are 100 to one that a person will either be wounded  
or killed. I can't stand it no longer Me. I'm cracking up. My mind's going ape-shit. I jump when  
someone just snaps his fingers. I've been up there before & its hell. Its pure hell. You watch  
your buddies fall like flies, and all the time you hear some gungy officer screaming "Push on,  
we're Marines." And each time I want to say "F\_\_ K' the marines I wanna go home. I ain't no  
hero." But its no good Me. I joined an outfit with a reputation, a rep. constantly being preserved.  
Me if I go up there again I'll go bezerk [sic]. My mind will crack. Its got to. A person can only  
take so much & then something must give. I've come so far Me. To have it all end my last 2  
months seems so meaningless – so much in vain. I can't die now, it doesn't make any sense, I've  
got too many things to do. And yet death looks so close. Its staring us all in the face like so  
many clouds. I can't stand it. Everybody else is so new. Half of them have never been shot at.

They're all boots, boots. Do you know what that means Me? It means they're all gonna be looking for me to tell them what to do, to show them. I can't show them Me without becoming some sort of John Wayne. And yet if I don't they're think I'm a coward. I'm not a coward Me, but its time to play safe. Its time to come home but they're all so innocent. They haven't even lost their baby faces yet. I just can't let them down Me. I just can't. But then I can't let you down either or my friends or my family. Oh God what should I do? You've got to help me Me. I'm going out of my gord [sic]. There's thousands of them Me. And they've got every weapon we've got. And they're all North Vietnamese trained soldies [sic] & they all smoke pot which gives them an ungodly amount of courage.

I need help Me. You're the only one I can turn to. I love you so much and yet believe it or not if I were to lose an arm or a leg I'd see to it that I never saw you again. Thats [sic] a hard thing to say but its true. I couldn't face you again. Please help me.

Love, Rock

9 Aug 67

Dear Me:

Hi! How's everything? Guess what, they're sending me on out of country R&R again. This time I'm going to Malasia [sic]. I'm trying to change it to Bangkok again though.

I wrote you kind of a messed up letter the other night. Just forget about it Me. I was feeling kind of depressed. Anyway don't worry about me, I'll be alright [sic]. Its just that I miss you so much & want so much to just be with you again real soon. And everytime [sic] I think that there's a possibility that that may never happen I get sick & fed up with the world.

I'm sending you another tape too. I only got to talk on one side though cause the recorder broke so don't think that it just didn't turn out.

Herb got yours & Saras [sic] letters. He was sort of dissipated [sic] with Saras [sic] though cause she only wrote on one page & didn't say a damn thing. Now we both know she can

do better than that. How do you expect Herb to come to New York if there ain't nothing for him to come up there for.

We're going out again tomorrow [sic] for about a week so once again you can expect a slight lapse between letters

I'm glad you got my last picture only you had better look at it again because I'm hardly any better looking than I was before. I've still got the same big nose & ugly face. You know maybe I ought to go to a plastic surgeon. Then maybe I'd be beautiful. Of course it would probably all go to my head.

My sister's in New York now & she tells me that I still hold the school record for the 100 yd. dash. Do you realize that that record has been standing for 4 years. We must have some pretty poor athletes at V.V.S. cause I damn sure wasn't that good.

I'm glad you're having so much fun on your vacation but don't be too surprised [sic] if you get a welcome back reception when you return to the office. I just know they had a hard time getting on without you.

Gosh I'm already on my 3<sup>rd</sup> page. That's rather unusual for me lately isn't it?

Oh Me I want so much to tell you how I love you but I just can't seem to find the words. For the first time in my whole life I can't put down in words just exactly how I feel. You have no idea how much I wish we were married so I could send you money & tackle all the responsibilities of married life. In a way I'm glad we're not because I'm over here & you're over there & it would be so much harder for you. Anyway, do you realize that in another month it will be another year since I've seen you. I just don't understand how in the hell you stand it. I really don't.

Well Me its getting rather late so I guess I better close. I just love that little phrase you inclosed [sic] along with the 4 leaf clover. Good Night

Love, Rock

PS – I've marked the envelope to let you know where I'm located.

27 Aug 67

Dear Me,

Hi! I just got back from R&R. I went to Bangkok again. I had a feeling I probably could manage to get my R&R changed. You're right in a way I did go back so that I could see a certain girl. I couldn't find her though. And then on my last day she found me. We went to see the movie "Hawaii." It was pretty good. Then that night we went to a night club where I proceeded to get drunk. After all it was my last night.

Then when I got back down here they tried to bust me down to a PFC again for being gone so long. I was only supposed to be gone 7 days but I was gone 12 days. I messed around down in Da Nang a few days before coming back up to Phu Bai. I managed to lie my way out of that one though.

The first thing I did was pick up my mail & there was a good 12 letters from you. You're so sweet. However I have a bone to pick with you & I'm serious. I got your pictures & Me I hate to say it again but you must do something about your weight. You're much too short to carry such a heavy load so you'd best heed my last warning as you only have about 61 days left in which to get down to 100 lbs. I also noticed that you didn't tell me how much you weigh & I'm sure you remember what I told you I'd assume if you didn't tell me.

You think I'm picking on you but actually all I want is to see you walk down the street & have people stare at you. Don't you think you'd like that?

This is an awfully short letter but a Sgt. Just walked in & told me to get on my gear because I have to go somewhere. I'll write again later.

Much Love, Rock

PS – See if you can get me John's address.

13 Oct 67

Dear Me:

Hi, how's everything going? I don't really have much of an excuse for not writing these past few days. The opportunity was there but I was just too tired. I've been in the rear on mess-duty for the past 6 days. Its hard work & it tires me to no end but at least it beats going on ambushes & patrols.

Oh, by the way, they decided to promote me again. I'm now a Corporal. Herb's still one step ahead of me though. He made Sargeant [sic].

Well Me, I'm getting short. I shouldn't have any more than 17 days. It seems like an eternity. I swear it does.

I'm going to buy me a car when I get home Me. Probably a Malibou but maybe I'll get a 'Vette.

How about sending me Jessie's address again real quick. I lost it again & I've got a few important things to tell him. Do you realize that Camp Lejeune isn't very far from Norfolk at all. Known we'll have some rip-roarin' week-ends in Wash. D.C.

I finally got around to writing a letter to ol' Leo the other day. Hope he ain't like me & writes right back.

It seems my family's all excited about me coming home pretty soon. I guess I'll surprise them in that case & not tell them when I'm coming. My Mom will probably have a heart attack.

Well Me ol' girl its getting late so I'd better close. Take care of yourself & remember – I'm full of sex and vinegar so be prepared.

Love, Rock