My dear Neil -

That date nearly knocks me cold and nothing in sight concerning your coming home. Weather is warmer here now and seems quite like spring. But I am not so lucky. Have had a bad cold and settled on my lungs. Cough very hard at times, now my lungs are sore and pain terribly. I have to go to the doctor regular and am confined to quarters - but little can be done as they have nothing to give you for anything like this. Outside of castor oil their supply is very limited.

Frost going out of the ground makes it very muddy and wet. So many civilian here are dying. There is an average of more than one death a day here and there can hardly be three thousand people in this town. All Catholics and you should see the ceremony they go through.
Everyone of the processions come just as you would expect. Sometimes they have their band out and playing a funeral dirge. The little fellows dressed in robes and carrying gill crosses on poles and sprinkling the way followed by the priests and bishop in their robes of state and the mourners all in black—with black veils covering the faces of the women and reaching nearly to the bottom of their dresses. Men dressed in black and wear silk plug hats and full dress suits. It's quite impressive. People away from home for one year and they stick rigidly to that custom. They don't dance either for that length of time.

Majority of the people here are now wearing black, the women wear it in such a becoming manner they could not look better.

All—have you the Hawaiian moon light walls. It's a long time out but have you it. We play it here on the piano occasionally. One little strain more than any other appeals to me as being the most pathetically weird of any I've heard. It's sweet and dreamy too.

Some thing about it grabs me as no other strain ever has. I know not why but it is fascinating for me. By some reason or other, if you ever play it think of me connected with it in this manner if you care to. I want you to get it if you have it not already.

I have not see a letter from you since yours of Jan 22. In which you have already answered.

We were very much disappointed in the last few days as we were promised this leave to southern France and now they send the leave bunch and not a word is said to us. So our opinion of some people would not bear writing at least to a modest girl.
well evil I can hardly tell you just how I feel, should you happen to wonder, I can get over my feeling to burn and be like physically, but lonesome. I have no words to express just how lonesome I am over here with all my comrades and civilians whom I cannot talk to. And you know what a feeling the spring of the year puts into a person, you want company and you can imagine how badly we feel it being two years away from home, and now not even a stranger to turn to for company, for they talk such an impossible language. I at one time consol’d myself with the thought that it could not last forever, but I’m now beginning to wonder if I was not a bit mistaken. Some time when I tell you some of the things we are forced to bear, you will not wonder we look forward in such a hopeless manner.

Write as often as you can, for a word from over there is better than medicine with love. Paul B Hendrickson May 25 1919 30 48
Miss Paul Hendrickson
1st Co. 129 Inf.
A.E.F.

Miss Cecil Rife
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Reid Nov, 1919