

## JUST FROM JULIA 1997

The last time many of you heard from me was at graduation when I was blithely celebrating my exodus from the halls of Monmouth High School. That was last May, but already it seems very far removed in time from where I sit now in my dorm room at Mount Holyoke College. During the five intervening months, I have had many exciting experiences which have served to draw my attention away from the joy of graduation and towards the possibilities of the future. Shortly after my graduation I received an offer to spend the summer as a nanny in Florence, Italy. The job offer entailed living with an American family in Florence and watching their two children, ages three and seven, in the mornings, and then having the afternoons and evenings free to roam the city. Naturally, having an unsatiable love for Florence, and being eager to see Italy and my friends there once more, I deliberated for a week and then accepted the offer. What followed was a hectic week of packing for four trips--the previously planned camping trip with my father and brother to Colorado, then a trip to a Guest Ranch in Colorado with my Aunt Marybeth and her family, my two month trip to Florence, and ultimately my move to Mount Holyoke. The hectivity was worth it, though, because each of these trips was a marvelous experience. The highlight of the camping trip was our group hike up Flat Top mountain--nine miles, but the view and the fabulous mountain air were worth it. Extensive horse-back riding was the best part of the ranch, but the relaxed atmosphere and the scenery were certainly great draws as well.

The most exciting part of my summer, though, naturally, was the time that I spent in Italy. When I accepted the job, I was largely eager to have the opportunity to spend my afternoons painting in Florence. I did do this, though not as often as I had planned, but even more rewarding than the painting itself, were the long walks that I took to get to my painting sights, and the long peaceful hours that I spent just gazing at Italy so that, even when my paintings did not come out well, I had the sight firmly planted in my brain, and a whole afternoon's worth of thoughts and observations stored away to mull over on my next walk. The children were very cute, and by the end of the summer we had grown very attached to each other, although I did get a little bit tired of bringing them to stores with me, and having the

shop keepers think that I was their mother. My big excitement during my stay in Italy was the discovery of the program "Firenze, Port'aperte" through which many generally closed museums and churches, in addition to those with regular hours, were opened for evening hours. I went out almost every evening with the mother of the family, and we had a great time going from place to place. I saw some magnificent buildings that I had never seen before, and enjoyed rediscovering places that, as a twelve year old in Florence, had not had much appeal. I also took three weekend trips in other parts of Italy--one to Viterbo, to visit on of my friends and her family, one to southern Italy to visit my cousins, and one to Rome, to explore a little bit in my last days before boarding a plane back to the U.S.

And so for the past two months I have been here at Mt. Holyoke, experiencing college life. Luckily, I have a fabulous room-mate, with whom I can happily spend what little spare time I have, and I have also been able to begin forming many friendships which I think will be lasting. My favorite class is my art history course, no surprise since I want to be an art history major. I am continuing to study the piano and french horn, and my biggest musical commitment of the year is singing in the college Gospel choir. I have written occasional articles for the college newspaper, and have joined the college art journal and the musical student association. My life here is insanely crazy, but I like it, and am looking forward to what I will learn and achieve over the next few years on this campus.

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*Giorno verra in cui l'uomo conoscerà l'intimo animo delle bestie, e in quel giorno un delitto contro gli animali sarà un delitto contro l'umanita ----Leonardo da Vinci*

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