August 22, 1922.

Dear Mary and Frank,

There are thrills and thrills and surprises of many kinds. I had one this morning when the purser handed me five crisp twenty dollar bills "To pay my expenses, caused by the delay in San Francisco." It is our first and quite probably our last experience of that kind.

The Hawaiian Islands somehow revise our ideas of geography. They are not dots in a watery waste but miniature continents, each self-contained and quite invisible from the rest, with ragged, jagged mountain peaks and ranges, fulfilling your imagination of what a mountain should be. I looked down a sheer drop of a thousand feet. Honolulu appeared at night as a great metropolis, miles and miles of brilliantly lighted streets and roads.

"Red Tape" we lay rocking in the waves a mile or two off the shore from six thirty to eight thirty until the "quarantine officer" (He looked like a souther colonel) could get in his uniform and walk slowly from bow to stern, "inspecting us". It took him fully ten or fifteen minutes to examine five or six hundred of us. It was nine thirty before we made fast to the wharf. All the passengers immediately went out for a walk, though I had been warned that "Honolulu on Sunday evening is quieter than a country graveyard on Christmas eve. Why they even roll up the sidewalks and take them in at eight."

We were met by a former student of mine and a friend now teachers on Hawaii- Theo told them we were coming. We were the first two passengers to be decorated with lei, long necklaces of fragrant flowers and of symbolic paper. The flowers were longevilla, red and white and pink, very fragrant trumpet-like flowers. By the time we sailed toward Monday every one was decorated. We had a little walk and a long cold fruit lemonade. Next morning we really saw the town, in a good Studebaker, with a most elegant and courteous real Hawaiian driver. I picked him out for his good looks and nationality. Saturday morning-We went to sleep Thursday night and waked up Saturday morning, having crossed the 180th meridian during the night.

If it were possible you should have a description of the typhoon of Tuesday. Our Hawaiian warned us seriously not to go on as there surely would be a storm, as "all the signs are wrong". There was no wind on the pali where it usually blows furiously even in calm weather. "All our people know that there will be a storm" he said. It seemed impossible as the last of the islands melted into the mist that evening. The night was oppressive. Next morning there was alternating bright skies and clouds. The breeze grew fresher and fresher until noon when there was half a gale and the spray began to fly. The barometer became uneasy, falling steadily, then it fell a full inch in a few minutes and the character of the storm changed. We had startling notice just as we were finishing lunch. The real wind struck us. There was a great roll 23½" we learned later. I held onto a curtain, Hittie to me, and we finished our coffee. Every dish sailed, an ice water pitcher emptied itself on Hittie as it went past through
the air. We were the only ones in sight. Tables were thrown from their sockets and people piled in heaps in the corners. There were two more great rolls later. No damage was done in our cabin but trunks and beds did slide until I got them braced together. The second cabin from us is still in the hands of the carpenters.

Of course the decks way up to the top were under water much of the time. Salt water poured down the stairways, beating in at every crevice. There was six inches in the smoking room. China boys everywhere mopped and baled water in dust pans, always chattering like magpies. There are an amazing, temperamental and natural laughing folk.

The cause of it all, the utterly incredible force of the wind, invisible and solid, fifty miles an hour, full gale, sixty, seventy, ninety, a hundred, a hundred twenty. Barometer 28.4 inches, waves, mountains of gray-green, faintly seen, imagined, towering way above us, reported to be seventy-five feet high. They might have been a hundred for all we saw. That was the strangest part of all, the strange green impenetrable darkness, or rather veil of invisibility. The air was everywhere full of flying water. Often you could not see the bulwarks, a few feet away. Occasional you would get a glimpse of a great sea washing across the bow or stern usually you only felt the ship shudder and quiver as she unloaded a deck load of water, shaking herself like a dog. The sensations are indescribable and unforgettable, this great invisible force, something heard, felt and imagined. The blackest mid-night could not shut out the world as completely as those clouds of flying spray. In the midst of it all some one found a completely exhausted sea bird. A little girl carried it to the hospital. Before we were shut in I slid back and forth across the deck, hitting the bulwarks like a catapult. There were many bruises and a few broken bones. Carpenters, smiths, and painters are at work everywhere.

One did not have time to be frightened, but the intensity of sensations was exhausting. We went to sleep at eight, great rollers still going over our port holes. At twelve Hittie waked me to see the stars and I opened the upper port. At three they opened the lower one. In the morning it was a calm, deep blue, rippling sunlit sea, the most astonishing thing of all.

Read Conrad's Typhoon.

Love and best wishes,

Ben

Our wireless went about two before any reports of typhoon were sent in. It is working now.