

DorleLettersH L0003 (English)

Toronto, Dec. 9th, '54.

Dear Mother, dear Freiwinker!

Please don't be upset that I'm not writing to each of you individually, but I know that what I have to say is for everyone. First of all, I wish you a merry Christmas and a cozy holiday season. Even though I wrote last year that it would be the last Christmas room, or whatever you call it, where one forgets, struggles, reads aloud, or sleeps!!! Even though I do that here too, it's not the same. - In the mirror it always looks, I mean, the tables are there, the sofa is there, but what's in my spot, in the Christmas tree memorial corner? Will you take a cheerful photo for me? I wish for it so much. So, now I have to write a bit about myself. I think I'm going to bed now. - That week I was in bed for $3\frac{1}{2}$ days, which is just plain stupid. I have to sacrifice my days off, but especially not now with Christmas approaching. I have to say, though, when I'm home in the evenings or mornings, I feel as if I were really sick, because it really got me down. So the next Monday morning I was kicked out; I could push myself, I thought, that it can't really come out, that's me, but I have to say, when a song was sung, that made it so simple for me. I didn't make it to the dance on the 12th, but on the 20th, the money talks, but at the castle.

I also know now why people here don't wear long underwear or warm pants. Many people have a car, so they aren't exposed to the cold on the street, and the others have the streetcar leaving from right in front of their house, and it's so hot inside the houses here that you really can't wear much. They're already freezing with just silk stockings, because Dorte said she's already experienced 40°C of cold. This is what I do: I don't wear an undershirt when I go to work, but I wear warm pants and training pants, i.e., ski pants, all the way to the hospital. There, like a lady, I take everything off and then just have my white uniform on, which is certainly warm enough. I really have to get used to the heat, especially at night; it's quite nice now because they're no longer heating the inner hallway.

Even if work sometimes keeps me from thinking of home during the day, which is great progress by the way, I still think of you all every evening when I go to bed. We really never go to bed before 10:30 or 11:30, and that's exactly the time when your light, Mother, is already on. So I close my eyes and travel by ship, we're always going from Konstanz to Meersburg, I go around the corner at Zipflers, up the castle stairs, where the Christmas tree might already be standing, then I ask Mrs. Stüble if I should take some bread with me and then get my bicycle and walk up the Stüblebuckel. It's not really looking right because of the salt on the road, but I'm happy that "maybe it will snow," and I'll come into the warm room with my cold ears. Of course, you're all already eating, so I have to be the last one to close the barn and then stumble into the dark kitchen. On the stove there's a pot of baked sauerkraut, and the bathtub for Köndi and for washing feet is right in the middle of the way.

In the living room, the Advent wreath is now hanging over the sofa. The radio is on the art-less broadcast, because it's Tuesday evening. After dinner, I go straight to bed, because they are all already upstairs, except for Püppi, who is making her skirt longer and her coat shorter. In her room, I very gently step on Chritzi's duvet, but of course she notices anyway,

then I quickly slip into bed with Mother, I still want to show her the pictures from my trip, but from there I quickly go to my own bed, which is of course cold. Dagmar has carefully tucked the bear into bed and when I look closely, the two of them aren't sleeping at all, but are sitting up in their pillows. Then I fall asleep, that is, I wake up again and am in our room and the clock on the cathedral building says it's a quarter to 12. I'm always so happy about how well I can still picture everything; for that period of time, I'm not in Canada at all. It's better with the homesickness now, I can sing the Christmas carols without crying. I'm sure you're thinking after this letter, how old is Meel anyway? 12 or 14? Well, she should write to me what you'd say in a letter, no matter how old one is. Dale just calculated that I've already been away from home for 1/10 of my entire time. Yesterday was record club again, it was very nice, afterwards we did crafts for 3 hours for our Christmas party, which we're having for the single Germans. There's quite a lot to organize and prepare. The next record club is on the second day of Christmas at our place, and for that I want to make an especially beautiful Christmas tree, of course. Did our package arrive safely? Were you terribly disappointed that I sent you so little? Believe me, it has never bothered me so much that I didn't have any money.

Hopefully you sent the album to Grandma without the pictures, because I'm sending her the pictures now directly from here to Rütt. - Thank you very much, Mother, for the pictures, but you're not in a single one of them, did they not turn out? If you send pictures, please put them in a sturdy envelope, because the airmail envelopes fall apart. Of course not with the four pictures, but you told me that the pictures I sent you once arrived here completely unpacked. You can just send them by regular mail. Your things took 3 weeks to get here. So you'll get my pictures soon too, maybe you'll be even happier to get them after Christmas, but by the way, there are no particular works of art among them, since the weather on the trip was often overcast, especially in Germany. When you've looked at the color pictures, will you please send them to me? Bärbel should give the film to Greth, I wrote everything else to her myself. For the last letter, Liesel, Bärbel and Dagmar, thank you all very much. I check every day when I come home from work to see if there's an airmail letter. I'll write to you all separately after Christmas. We all have a lot to do now, you surely do too. Tomorrow we're setting up in the hall where the dancers' competition and the following day's events will be on Saturday. We're going to bake next week at Inge's, she has a nice oven. Yesterday another German nurse started at the hospital, but we speak English with each other. That's fine with me, because that way I can enjoy that I didn't have any money. Please don't celebrate New Year's too early, say hello to Bli, and Christel should pour some lead for me, but something good, right Christel! Don't go to bed at 9 o'clock, but make a good fruit salad. We will also do lead-pouring, and we will definitely be thinking of you. Health is the most important thing one can wish for, I see that best every day now in the hospital. Also eat a good sausage and a reasonably good essay, so you don't have to have so many worries, Mother. To you, Ulla, I wish a nice, relaxing time. You, Ping, should finally find a good position, so that your profession completely satisfies you. Chritzi, I wish you much success in your profession, and Bärbel, a good school report card. But don't just think about school, also learn a little at home, don't be selfish when Dagmar is playing but your room isn't tidy. To all of us, I wish a healthy, happy reunion in the year 1956! Until next time, farewell and warm greetings from your Mech.

By the way, thank you very much for the magazines, I was terribly happy. At least this way I can keep up with German film life. Believe it or not, this visit has used up 7 rolls of film. Dec. 15th I still haven't sent the letter because I was enlarging pictures last night, and I wanted to send them along to you. But I still haven't been able to make all of them, because the soft paper still has to be ordered by the photographer.