

She was in
Kannack when
she received
this letter

Friday December 5, 1997
Interstate 81
Near Staunton VA

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Dear Margrit,

At 8:45 am, we have just pulled away from White's Truck Stop, where Tochen slept for about 10 minutes. While I visited a very clean rest room and then walked around the large shop of this enterprise: a Stationery Section features many sizes and various formats of "Truckers Logs," which I guess are detailed time and expense accounts. (see other side)

My own stationery is a gift from our landlord, left over from the time when his chief line of work was Automobile Insurance. Rebekah evidently got hold of this pad and enjoyed checking off a list of invisible achievements. That must have been a year ago. By now she would surely have more to write down. I rarely make this sort of list - except that I sometimes make a little list at the top of page in my journal of letters to write; but it occurs to me that you might wish to give a satisfactory form to the days that you spend at your "Retreat" by some sort of list of reasonable, mostly agreeable goals.

If I were you I should I say, in your situation, I would put a priority on getting acquainted with some of the plants & trees, using Donald Stokes' A Guide to Nature in Winter and that other seasonal nature guide in brief essay form written by the woman who spent the winter in a Michigan cabin - I attach some suggestions.

10 am. We are on a side road. Tochen is napping.

Poor's Post

(5)

That large volume was my introduction to poetry. It is called Come Hither!
The first poem is, I think,

"This is the Key of the Kingdom.
Do you know it? If not I'll
send you a copy, ^{* enclosed} or write it out
from almost faithful memory when
the light is better. It is 4:50 pm
as we travel through Newark,
5 traffic lanes abreast (in each
direction!) moving relatively slowly
5²² pm at Hahokus service area shortly before
we cross the Hudson R. on the Tappan Zee bridge.
It is raining lightly and there is said to be snow
at Bridgeport CT. John is wide awake, but says
"Schlaumert ein, ihr matten Hugen."

Well, we moved very slowly in Connecticut
traffic, faster after Hartford and reached home
before 11 pm.

Leah spent most of Sat morning with me.
At one time we sat on the sofa and I read
to her while we covered our legs in the chilly
air with my green plaid blanket. She
noticed the fringes on it. with that little inquiring

information that seems to mean "What is it? What is it for?" Then she noticed fringes on the Oriental carpets; ~~and~~^{but} later in the kitchen showed me the edges of one of the rubber-backed "inside" mats. So I explained to her that the mat was there to clean our feet, and to keep us from slipping if we came in with puddle-wetness or snow on our shoes; that fringes did not go with ~~this~~ this kind of useful little rug. So you see, I am always led back to this matter. (Scatter rugs)

I will call L.H. Bean tomorrow and order a Swatch for you, but it seems to me that the fashion statement you desire for an entrance mat is farfetched and inappropriate. The little rug should not ask: "Don't you think I'm pretty?" It should say: "You are safe! you won't slip and fall, we care about your security." I don't ask for an upholstered, ~~furry~~ toilet seat, nor for an Arabian carpet at the door. Form follows function.

I walked to two shopping areas in Beirut on Sat afternoon both for the exercise and to see what I could find

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in the way of mats for the drainboard.
As a sample I enclose a sink
mat. Similar drainboard mats are available,
some not open but with the same
rectangular pattern slightly recessed into
the face of the mat. Please Keep, Do
Not Return this mat! I will use it.
Sizes of the other mats are noted on the
attached card.

I also enclose copies of
Ardizzone illustrations. The little girl
skipping is one of my favorite characters:
Elsie Piddock in a tiny ~~poem~~ Poem Book by Eleanor Furgerson

See also some of the children's
art work enclosed.

12-8-97. Jochea says you telephoned yesterday.
By now 10³⁰ am, you may be in Dr. Gable's
office. I hope this effort works out and
gives you some real contact with people in
the community who have real problems.

A final (for today) suggestion about the drainboard.
Take off the drainboard mats. Store them flat
with paper towels between. Buy a handsome
cutting board and use towels underneath to
prevent slippage. Then continue looking for the
right mat. Don't project other dissatisfactions on the humble mat.