

Sat. Dec. 13 1997  
Belmont, MA

Dear Margot,

I'll try to keep this letter short by limiting it to the back of the program of the "Winter Concert" that I attended yesterday at the Burbank School. Rebekah and Nathaniel had each asked me to come. By coming in a little late, just before the last group of children filed into the gymnasium I got to sit on a comfortable stackable chair instead of bleachers. At my age and with my skeletal problems one appreciates such bonus. ~~An~~ Even later arrival was Aunt Marnie, Esther Cross, who only got there for the last 3 numbers. Phyllis was there with Benjamin & Leah; I saw them leave but could not get close enough to greet them.

It was interesting to see the <sup>school</sup> children sitting in 2 modified approximate color block groups: the Kindergarten in blue shirts & jerseys, the 3rd grade also in blue and purple, the 1st grade in green and the 2nd in red. Strangely I can't remember the 4th grade, the oldest class in the elementary school.

Nathaniel looked happy and bounced in rhythm to the songs. Rebekah looked distinctly uncomfortable, perhaps because she had to kneel being neither in the front row which sat on the floor, nor in the back row which stood. Or perhaps, even more likely, she felt the music to be inferior, as it was. I regret that the politics of public school limits the musical selections to such trivial songs, to such a tit-for-tat balance. How I miss the excitement of what I used to sing and hear in the private schools where I was a student and a teacher. At the end of the program, ~~I~~ I stayed a while to talk to Esther Cross and suggested we walk around part of the school. She liked the idea, was a little disconcerted that we did not find the school office to get visitor ID

labels as the principal said we should, but she especially enjoyed reading 3rd & 4th grade work displayed on bulletin boards on the third floor where Rebekah has her classroom. Rebekah's class has been studying early New England. In a composition on the Theme: What I would take on a Pilgrimage, she said she would take books, money and food. We were interested to see 4th grade maps of Canada and 4th grade compositions on the Theme The Important Thing About Me Is. Some said: That I can skateboard, some that they had wonderful parents, one (a girl with a Japanese name) said: "That I can walk," she did not explain what problem in her life made this such an achievement. One girl was happy to be different.

This evening I took my walk in the gloaming, nice Scots word. I wanted to mail a note to the former neighbor who has recently moved into a retirement home located in a community for retired Catholic nuns in Lexington. She had written several notes to me, some in a somewhat forced cheerful tone. She is in her eighties and a determined and courageous person so I feel sure that she can make the adjustments.

I'll mail this to you tomorrow. I hope that you are happy to see the wonder of White Top when it emerges from the clouds. Have you been in the woods when the sun shines on ice laden branches that glitter and then drop their tinkling, glassy crusts? Love Margot