

PC16/5/3/2/87

P.O. Box 71,
Hilton,
3245.

23rd November, 1980.

Dear Doctor,

I see the letter to which this is, a reply has a date on it which says something like 15/5/79. That can't be right !

We are recovering from the after-effects of a party we had for Anton last night, and which seems now to have become an annual event, at which too much beer and wine is drunk by too many people, there is a band which makes too much noise -- and prizes are presented to the past season's stars of his soccer league. His main activity is running this damned league and last night was the highlight of its year. Each year some poor sucker, who knows nothing about soccer and not much about speech-making, is cajoled by Anton into making a speech and presenting the prizes. Last year it was Pat McKenzie, last night it was C-Mitchell. Mitchell came supported by Mary and five daughters, the other half-dozen or say members of his family being otherwise occupied. He was in good form last night although he hasn't been all year, reason being that, in August, half his school burnt down. Luckily everyone was at breakfast when it happened, so there were no casualties, but it left a hell of a mess and the big question to be answered, "Is it worth building it all over again?", the last question being complicated by the fact that the insurance money obviously wasn't going to be enough to make it possible just to tell a contractor to get on with it. Anyway, the school has survived and he has gone ahead with rebuilding, although there is still a lot to do these Christmas holidays. I think I told you one daughter has been staying with us for the last few years, doing bio-chemistry. She is about to finish. The last one is writing her Matric and going nursing if she passes. The other three who were here last night haven't a single qualification between them, have never shown any enthusiasm for making money by working, but, by some miracle, are all working just now.

Sam provided the curry for last night and I had a beer with him before the party started. The business of the buses isn't resolved yet. They're still arguing about the compensation. In the meantime he is helping a brother who has a tea-room and is building a breadvan lorry which he will operate himself once it is ready. In a couple of weeks we will be going together to drink beer in the Berg with Paton and Mitchell. The first half of Paton's autobiography was due out yesterday and he has just finished a novel which is supposed to be the first of three. Not bad at 77 Meidner. How the hell can you let them talk about retiring you when you're nowhere near the Msimang/Paton league? Selby, incidentally, keeps chugging along. I think we must have a party for him next year. By then he should be 95 by my calculations.

Helping behind the bar at last night's celebrations was your friend Weinberg, at whose daughter's wedding we were present a few weeks ago. The thing was on and off about five times in the last five months, so I'll be surprised if it lasts. Others joining in those celebrations were Dyers, Biggs, Gardners, Morkills, Fridays etc.. I spent a day with Elliot some weeks ago. He is now the mayor of the dump to which our friends moved him. Last year they had a very good bus boycott there. He has a new wife and baby and is unchanged. On the political front I can't think of anything cheerful to tell you about. The Nats go through some motions of change in areas which don't threaten their position in anyway. It is, at bottom, one

suspects, no more than an effort to buy support from the other side of the colour-line from people who will be made comparatively prosperous by the new, stream-lined version of apartheid. People like Poovalingam are buying it, but young, urban blacks aren't, and, as one has always known they would if white South Africa didn't start to come to its senses, are becoming bitterer and more anti-white by the day. Yet it still is not too late to win them to a negotiated change, I am sure, but these bastards can't yet, and perhaps never will, bring themselves to negotiate. Our children continue in much the same aimless way as ours. Christopher has been working (if you can call it that) on the farm this year, but it looks as if that is coming to an end. Vanessa gave up teaching Arabs English in order to be taught Chinese medicine. I suspect the man who runs the clinic where she is meant to be learning it is a crook, but without seeing him in the flesh I can't really tell.

We are holding thumbs for Mugabe. I hope that whole set-up isn't going to fall apart along tribal lines.

That should be enough to keep you going for a year or two.
Our love to Olga.