

November 22/81

Dear Auntie and Cousin!

Thanks for your last letter. Hearing about the peach trees blooming while we were getting our first snow (comes earlier every year) made me envious. Have had a few pleasant Sundays lately but most taken up preparing for a debate for my M.Ed. course. Finally got out in my garden last Sun. and did some necessary pruning, raking and cleaning of the poor gardens. Many of my perennials, including all my roses, have been killed off by the 2 freaky winters they had here while I was overseas. My pride and joy - great therapy working in the dirt - and maybe something to do with my roots on the farm. We'll see what still lives next spring - unfortunately a long time away. School is still taking most of my time - never can get ahead of those 6 yr. olds. Now there's a definite spread of learning ability of 3 years so planning never seem to be adequate. Course has gone well but takes too much time as well. One more essay to go before Xmas. Then it's time to get working on this house. Have only had time for some superficial cleaning since Aug. but some real scrubbing and painting will fill the holidays. Everything's so mundane and serious here. Guess I knew these 2-3 years would be like that but it doesn't make it easier. Haven't got much time to anything political either. But I'm so disillusioned with the social democrats I used to work for that I think I'll save my energy in this conservative era as far as party politics go. But one piece of good news is a victory for our party in Manitoba in a recent provincial election. Great because they tossed out one of the most conservative governments in Canada next to ours in Ontario. Some action re: antinuclear protests The Peace Council is gearing up and we're collecting names on a peace petition but you should see the response - noone can perceive the possible wild future, thinks it's a Commie front or they're just too concerned with personal problems. Things are getting close to a full-fledged recession, though, with very high interest rates, layoffs in many industries and high inflation. Looks like a bleak winter for some. I finally raised enough money for a cheap little car, then found out my mortgage comes due in Jan. 81. So the money I was planning to send over will have to wait until early next year. I sometimes feel like I'm newly married and starting all over. But if I get this house paid off, I'll feel freer to move out somewhere again. Finally called Sandi today. She's been busy spending time with her sister who has had one operation and is due for many more. Sandi's excited about Randy's expected arrival next Sunday. They might be down this way before Xmas so hope they drop in so I can get the latest news from Lesotho. She said that Randy finally got to spend some time with you before he left. Wish they weren't so far away so that we could visit more often. Remember Betsy? She's working for the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of S.A. Country and very busy. Unfortunately that group raises \$ separately from the ANC group in Toronto due to some differences in policies or something. Anyway Jane (who was in Lesotho for a few mo. working as a Crossroads volunteer) and I are planning to go to an ANC sponsored dance next Sat. and take some friends along to see what's happening and use the time as a good excuse to socialize. Amnesty put on a great conference on The Writer and Human Rights a while ago. I attended an evening of readings which was pretty powerful - good to keep the soul remembering what's happening in so many places. If you've heard any news about Canada lately, you'll be amused to hear that our politicians are still wrangling about Native and women's rights in the constitutional package.

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It's like a football game so far but getting close to the end now - as debate is going on in the House. Just amazes me how they play with rights. This country can't be so damn proud of itself the way it's acting..... How's school going for Cuz? When is she coming over here for university? And you to visit? About time we had a dinner and a gab again, eh? I sent a Xmas parcel to Bon E with a few things in for you two, but don't know when the post will deign to get it there. Got a letter (hallelujah!) from Gianfranco in Rwanda. He's an "expert" now and seems to like his job so far - an advisor in economics by the sound of things. But living conditions are something else. He actually yearns for the rondavels, if you can believe it. I'll try to get a copy of his letter to send along and to let people know his address. I was really pleased to get it, knowing that GF doesn't normally correspond with many. Hope to keep in touch with him. He was my best supporter in debates on women's issues. By the way, are there any books that you'd like to have that I might find here for you? Just let me know, okay? I'm so behind in all my responsibilities and can't keep up with the reading of all the printed material that I have coming in, let alone read anything like a novel. So I'll be off now to write a little to Bon E to include with this, then get at my homework. Hope you 2 and your other friends are faring well. I worry about you all.

love,

Brenda xox