

10 Dec. 1980

Dear Phyllis and Sukhthi,

What can I possibly say? The shock of hearing about Lesotho's treachery in closing its doors to Father John is almost too great to bear. What words of consolation can I possibly offer to you, when I know how deeply you are grieving and how terribly forsaken you are feeling. What calming reassurances can I give you, when I know how ominous the broader implications of this act are and how tenuous your own safety in the country is. What encouragement can I send to Father John, when I know how much he loves Lesotho and how committed he is to helping the refugee community there. My heart weeps. All I can say is that I am sorry, very sorry that this ugly incident ever happened. I wish Father John much courage in his adjustment, I wish you Phyllis much strength as you suffer the loss of his companionship, and I wish you Suks much patience as you grow up in a world gone mad, a world in which GOOD people always must endure hardships at the hands of those in power. Thank goodness the new structures are coming soon -- if only the daybreak were not preceded by such desolate night!

The day after receiving this news from you, I got the letter in which you described your new house. (It sounds like a great place!) The point is that the place from where it was sent surprised me, and now I wonder where you two actually are. Maybe this letter won't even reach you? Please let me know if/when you change residence, yes? Also, what is this I hear about some more shrapnel having been removed from your body, Phyl? Is that rumour true? How are you feeling now? Do you have any plans for Christmas? Oh yes, I want to hereby wish you a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope at least you'll have some time off from work to relax.

Here things are pretty hectic right now. Would you believe my parents bought a house? The one we are presently in has a basement, then two stories, plus an attic -- the stairclimbing was getting too much for my mother's heart, so now they've got one with everything on one level. Of course that means that it is a lot smaller too. Which in turn means that all the accumulated junk that up til now has been quietly piling up in the huge attic must be sorted through and given away or thrown out. The hard part is the books: for our whole family, reading is a central part of our lives, for work as well as for play. So my parents want to keep most of their hundreds of books ... I need not mention my backaches from lugging all of them downstairs! However we don't want to move into the new house before we've sold this one, so it is getting a bit complicated. Newspaper ads and a sign out front have not brought customers yet. In the meantime we are painting and fixing up the new house. It is here in Akron, a bit further out of town. I am glad to be able to be available to help my parents during this time of change.

I am enrolling for a statistics course at a nearby university, since it has turned out that most graduate programmes require this for admission. Have decided to specialise in pediatrics (kiddie nursing) since it seems to be the one most universally applicable of all the specialties. The other global one, midwifery, I would prefer to do in the far superior British system. So things are gradually coming into focus, with the University of Colorado being a prime option. I do not want to give up my dream of going to Toronto, but unfortunately the nursing programmes there just are not what I am looking for. I think I'll get the MS and then go north to work. We'll see ... Nothing is definite, as you can tell!

Enclosed you'll find a picture of me with Peter and Debby, just so you can visualise me in my present context! Also a clipping from a paper with an announcement about one of my presentations (I had nothing to do with it, so take neither blame nore credit for the ad). The evening itself was quite a success, and I found that even though my slides were mainly of Lesotho, it was easy to weave in a lot of info about South Africa also. Thanks for the snaps you sent of your new place! Nice poster, Suks. Time is really in short supply around here, I just close. ALL MY LOVE, your

*R.*

*symposium went well, will tell you all about it.*