

21.2.97



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Dearest Phyl,

I see you! And I disagree - you are still beautiful! And that's not fat - that's unhappiness and sorrow surrounding you. It has to go somewhere and it's gone to your gut in your case. How to tackle it though - please don't punish yourself - both your boys can take responsibility for themselves - Shardan knew the dangers and accepted to take risks - and Shah, well for him it was tragic circumstance - one in thousands and he was one of the few. Of course you know all this and have been the mother left behind to mourn and taken it out on your poor old body. Mind you Phyl, take it from me it's no fun being thin as a rake either - it's too fucking cold in the winter! If only you could graft some of you onto me eh.

I have had complaints from all quarters - Botswana, Canada, you, Britain that I am the world's worst correspondent. Well as usual no excuses. This winter I've had bronchitis, my case at the tribunal did not go well. The ex-employers produced two false witnesses and a false document. So now the 4 judges take two months to consider my evidence, their evidence and come to a conclusion. I don't hold out a lot of hope. However, I feel that the employers will not treat other people so badly in future and for that I feel there is a small victory. If I win some dosh though, I will come to give you a hug. Promise.

France, oh corrupt and without scruples is going more and more right wing. The extreme right, promoting "chuck out the immigrants" policy have won more seats and one must now report all foreignern visitors to the local police. Well fuck them. There is talk of civil disobedience amongst visitors hosts.

And south Africa? I hear most things from World Service.

Next month I go to Canada for 6 weeks. When I was there many years ago I did some experiments with a friend in mixing caribou hair with wool and making a super warm fabric. She carried on with the research after I left for Lesotho, having it commercially tested etc. and has now got funding to start production. So I'm invited back to do the initial runs of the fabric in a northern community. If successful, it could become a small cottage-industry in isolated northern communities with Indian and Inuit running the production. So, I'm off to Labrador to set the felt making machine up, strip the hides of caribou(reindeer - same animal) for the hair, do the mixing and make up boot liners, parka liners and whatever else we can invent. I'm quite excited about the whole thing and will let you know how it goes.

What was Sarah doing in southern Africa? If I come I'd like to go on a tour of all the rural textile workshops and document women's stories who work at them. Fancy it?

My love,

MARY

28/2/97