

At. O. Frederick, No. 2101
12/16/73

Dear Diane,

We are having what can be the beginning of a white Christmas. As predicted, snow has begun to fall. How far to the east the center of the low from the south is will determine how much snow we have. From the duration of the rains below here, this stuff will be coming down all the rest of the day and through the night. I watch the weather this time of the year (when I remember to) because it is always good to know in advance if we can get snowed in. It is possible. So, yesterday I got us a nice seven-foot white pine (the kind with long, delicate needles) that I'll plant when the decorations come off. Then I added to the woodpile outside the kitchen door, as I did again this morning. I've got enough other wood stacked for chopping to keep us from freezing for more than a week after what is ready for the fireplace is gone. The freezer is full. There are enough cans on the shelves. And we can take comfort that the last time we were snowed it lasted for eight days and we did not go stir-crazy.

I'm a reg'lar ol' boy scout. I've got enough batteries laid aside to keep two sets going for two weeks!

I don't expect to get snowed in. I don't want to be. But that is life in the mountains. It can happen.

It happens here more than with out neighbors because of what we like. We like these trees very much. They are a joy to us, to the birds and the animals, but we have to pay a price for them. Our lane is lined with them on both sides. If the snow comes from the north or the south, they make the snow drift in the lane.

But there will be a hard moment when we decorate the tree. There will be some very pretty decorations that will remind us of a certain young woman who is in durance vile. It doesn't snow where she comes from. I don't think it snows where she is. And I don't think it would make any difference to her if it did, even a blizzard. She is already snowed in. Or was the last time we heard.

With a kind of snow that doesn't melt easily. Takes a very strong sun to melt that kind of snow.

There are allk kinds of snow. Some has no advantages. The Houston kind, where you are.

I have never been able to tell myself how to extend a greeting appropriate to this season to one who, like you, has circumstances to which all the traditional words are unsuited. I have had occasion in the past. Never before to a woman, though. But the communications problem is the same for men and women.

Can there be a merry Christmas or a happy New Year in jail?

If I can't see it, I do hope so. And I do hope that a fertile imagination whose fertility is so well known to me can figure out a way to be both merry and happy inside a jail.

These conditions are states of mind anyway.

And there are so many of us who are not restrained by bars and solid steel who are so much prisoners.

I know some characters who are not as free as the Bird Man of Alcatraz. Even if no restraints are imposed upon them.

So, if I can't use the usual words, I'll use others. I do hope that things are as good with you as they can be under the circumstances.

As you know, all I know about these circumstances is your immediate environment as of the last time I heard from you. Three months ago.

Maybe something good happened to you in those three months?

I do hope so!

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg