Dear Annie and Boris:

We have had two fine letters from Boris during the summer and autumn, and we have been very, VERY remiss in not having replied. If I had written each time I thought of you, you would have been showered with letters and sick of me, no doubt. Now I am not even sure where to address you but I shall telephone Bo before addressing the envelope.

The plain truth is that we have been thoroughly displaced since August, and are still not settled back into the house and in order sufficiently to find things—such as your letters, for example. To tell the misfortune as quickly as possible: On the last week in August, our living-room ceiling fell (we were both in the room, I leaped out of the way, and Bill was saved by the wings of the chair he was sitting in). There has been so much heavy-truck traffic on this street during the past two years due to the freeway and highway construction south of us, and this is a hollow street—that is, there are about 18 inches of pavement on top of a street-wide tunnel, 40 feet deep. You can imagine the vibration caused thereby, and the consequent cracks in walls and ceilings. On examination by proper experts it was found that it was only a matter of time—days? weeks?—until ceilings on other floors would go likewise. Everyone of the contractors who came to see, refused to touch the job unless we were evacuated and they could do the whole house. That meant moving out with every single thing down to the last sheet of paper. Lucille and I started packing up. After three weeks of work (I am sure no ditch digger worked harder) we were ready for the movers. We ourselves went to the nearby CORONET Hotel, into a 2-room furnished apartment, from whence I could come to the house 1 to 3 times a day and oversee the job—for in a house more than 100 years old, unexpected problems always arise. Finally it was finished, and the house is practically a complete interior reconstruction, ceilings, walls, floors refinished. We came back into it exactly 3 weeks ago yesterday. Lucille
Bill, bless his heart, works away every day at trying to get some order out of chaos in the library, and gets awfully discouraged too. He can not do anything, even shaving and getting dressed, without getting an attack of tachycardia (breathlessness) and he must sit down or lie down and take the pills for relief. 

He cannot stop or lift, of course, and he constantly berates himself because he cannot help more. But I am cross and out of sorts also because this has kept us from going away from this climate, before the winter started. Which reminds me—I recall in your last letter you stated that you were seriously considering coming to the U.S. in February. Surely you will not overlook Washington, even though we do have nasty winters here—no cold dry sunny days like Switzerland, but wet, slippery, penetrating and cloudy and windy—nevertheless we do hope you will stay with us. We have the two rooms and bath on third floor (elevator carries you up one flight). And if you go to West Coast first and then come back to Washington, we still urge you to stay with us.

It is a shame you missed our wonderful autumn—it was exceptionally long, beautiful, and mild. It was the only thing that consoled me for having to stay in Washington during this house mess. Autumn is really the best of all the seasons in Washington. Bill, poor darling is still struggling with depression. He has had so many physical ailments this past year—two severe attacks of coronary insufficiency, operation for skin carcinoma, intestinal disorder, impairment of the circulation—for months it seemed we went nowhere except to doctors and laboratories.

We hope you have both well, and that trip is forthcoming and that we shall see you before too long. Do have a nice Holiday Season, wherever you are. And much love from both of us to both of you.

Affectionately,
Mrs. Elie Zeth S. Friedman
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Washington 3 D C U S A