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Dear Bedstemor and Tante Anna.

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As usual it was a great pleasure to read your letter - and your vision was not far from reality: Two days ago the snow actually did cover all our trees and the small road. During my morning jogging the sun already warmed the air a bit, the sun now rises a little before 7 o'clock, setting around 6 pm. This means that the days are now more than 4 hours longer than during Christmas.

Inside the house it is indeed snug and cozy. I am now sitting in my new room with Benthes room next door, looking at the fire in our cast iron stove. The temperature is my favorite 73 F - mind you that with a stove the air circulation is much larger than with normal central heating, which should be max. 69F. We have in all our new windows a small airtake, which we leave open all the time. What a joke - we have plastered everything in the walls and ceiling, to ensure it to be completely airtight, and then we just pay extra to have windows with this air ventilation.

Since I now have my own room - and my taste of music is absolutely different from that of Benthe - I have bought a second hand stereo so that I can listen to my favorite CD's. Right now I am listening to one of the very good ones, Mozart's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra nr. 21. Here we also call it the Elvira Madigan Concerto, named after a film of the same name, about a Swedish circus artist who fled to Denmark with her rich aristocratic lover. Eventually they were traced to the island of Lolland south of Sealand, where one shot the other and then committed suicide. My absolute favorite for the time being is the Emperor Piano Concerto No. 5 by Beethoven. It is just great. Also Per Gynt by Edvard Grieg is a masterpiece. Part of this CD contains also 'From the time of Holberg' which reminds me of something astonishing. I have read that it was only after Holberg and his popular plays that we got the official written Danish language. Up till then the language of the upper class had been German, presumably because the court used to marry German princesses - and those kings who were nuts (which were most of them those days) imported German chancellors.

Benthe, who is more to the rock music, sometimes asks me what is so special about this kind of music. Apart from the obvious that the modern music for me has no tune at all, and I can hardly distinguish one from the other, it is quite difficult to explain. But somehow I feel elated to something higher, some majestic feeling, with a greatness out of this world. If I should feel depressed such music immediately takes me away to the shores of paradise. What kind of music do you fancy?

Actually we completed the new house just before Christmas, but fortunately the

outdoor work was done already by October. Even before we got the windows and doors we installed the stove, so we could do the indoor finishing in relative warmth. What we have done actually is an extension of the old house, and in a couple of weeks we hope to be able to start on the renovation of the old section. It is poorly insulated and we want to renew floors, walls and ceiling. When that has been done we shall install new kitchen and bathroom and combine the new and the old sections into one.

I am not very keen on the building side, which is the absolute favourite job of Benthe. I would rather take my backpack and walk on the Norwegian fjeld - and return when I got a signal from Benthe that everything had now been completed. However Benthe has taken a job in our local Grundfos company, said to be the major world manufacturer of pumps with more than 10.000 employees all over the world - including factories in the USA. Right after Easter she shall start on a training course estimated to last 6 months before she actually commences work in the factory. She is very happy about that, and during the training she is off already at 2.30 pm which leaves her time to run the renovation work here as well. However I gather that I must stay at home and may be even do some work also.

Two weeks ago Camilla and I went to the Harz National Park in Germany in order to do some hiking. However the weather was quite bad and we only had one half day in the hills (the highest mountain is 3.000'). This park is situated partly in the old East Germany DDR, where I used to travel a lot during the communist times, so obviously I wanted to stay in a town on the DDR side. This was called Werningerode, an old town with many medieval buildings and even a castle on the nearest hilltop. So between the showers we walked in the old town, visited the castle, the museum and did some shopping. Camilla found some earrings and a bracelet to replace some of her stolen jewelery. Actually it was not stolen here but in Aarhus, where she is working. Aarhus is the second largest Danish city and of course has more crime than we do here at the country side.

Last month my mother, 85, had a coronary - she fainted while shopping in a super market. However she came to the hospital in time and the treatment was efficient, so she is now almost back to her normal activities. Of course she cannot work so much, and the local municipality is sending a lady one a week to help her take a bath and once every two weeks to clean the house. We have had a lot of debate here about the help to the elderly people, as many municipalities have reduced the free assistance. In Denmark we are right now in a situation with high employment, as during these years we have a record low number of young people entering the job market. In contrast Benthe and I are from the baby boom after WW2, so we hope there will be enough activities to pay for our pension. You may compare Denmark to a New England municipality, where you can follow the situation closely and immediately record any change. The US, in contrast, is such a diversified country attracting so many investments and bright young people, who want to make a career, and with your open economy you are riding a on wave of prosperity. Actually most European countries have big problems, because we are caught by our extremely high levels of administration, regulations and social security. Sometimes I wonder if it is indeed better to sacrifice some of the extremes, as is often the case in the US, in order to create more

dynamics as a whole. Here we have created a safety net so high that we have taken the initiative away from a lot of people, who only rely on the public help.

It was very interesting to read about your mother's days in Ålesund - no, I did not know that Kaiser Wilhelm had played such a humanitarian role by helping after the big fire. During my visits I have mainly seen the roads from the airport to the office of our importer and to the hotel. However once we drove by car to the next town, a winter day with the purest white snow on the mountains, with the dark blue of the fjords in the background. It is really so amazingly beautiful. I could not take my eyes away from it, so fortunately it was not me who was the driver.

I was also not aware that Helen Sutton was a writer, she did not tell anything about that, although we had a lot of conversations about literature. I think I will write her to ask for some of her books. Did you read her books? In exchange she gave me another book, when we met, 'The Dancer Upstairs' by an English writer by the name Nicholas Shakespeare.

It is great that Anna and Vicky could fly to Iceland - I find it a very interesting place with all its volcanic background, its thermic wells (did you know that Reykjavik is heated by thermic hot water), and the green houses with bananas - the only place in Europe for such crops.

We often talk about the wonderful time we spent with you in Ipswich, especially since we were completely unaware that we had such charming and fascinating relatives in the USA. From all of us the very best