

LETTER TO A PRISONER OF WAR (dated December 17, 1946)

Where are you,  
my Christmas gift of all,  
didn't you say months ago  
we should have the house ready  
for celebration?

Well, ready we are,  
all of us,  
the children are waiting  
with their gifts for you.

How shall I tell them  
that this war  
is not yet over?

A man we knew  
came back from Russia  
just in time for dying,  
and my brother Arthur,  
the skinny one,  
wrote from a prison camp  
in Egypt this year.  
Hermann's Christmas letter  
came from England again,  
not a word about being freed soon.

You, my love,  
and I shall light candles  
in different lands  
to celebrate  
our loneliness  
again.

Gerda Nischan  
115 Wilkshire Drive  
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Only surviving letter of my father to my mother when they were "distance-dating" with my father living in Rochester, working as a baker in a bakery, and my mother living in Germany. The letter is dated Sept.1930.

My Darling,

thank you for your wonderful letter which I received on Saturday. I am so happy that you are well again; I look forward to the day when I shall see you again and when you will be mine forever. I have a hard time making out your face from the picture you sent me and how I remember it. You will be my faithful companion I hope, the one who can help get rid of the sadness of my youth and who will understand me in good and bad times. I cannot forget all the bad things that happened, and I am serious in nature because of it, I am not understood by many but I believe you alone can and will. Once you are here I can tell you all of it. Please visit my aunt in Hockenheim, she knew my parents well and she will answer all your questions. I do not have a photo of my mother, only a photo of her gravestone, but I believe this aunt has a photo of both my parents.

Your sister also wrote to me on my birthday, sending best wishes, and I will write to her soon to thank her. By the way, is your birthday really on Oct.7? Then we will be close in our birthdays. I have been in your hometown once, but did not know you then. Yes, I know the hill you mention in your letter because I hiked there with my friend Max On August 27, 1927, right up from the trainstation to the top of the hill where we loverlooked the town of Eisenberg, the lovely Palatinate hills in the background, the majestic Donnersberg in particular, which I am familiar with

like most of the area. I know we could live there happily if only OUR FATHERLAND WOULD NOT BE IN THES UNFORTUNATE AND HOPELESS SITUATION. If things should improve one day I will return but for the time being America has to be our home. It was my rough fate that forced me to leave for America, I did not really want to go and would by now have returned already if things would not look so bleak and I am therefore glad that I have escaped the chaos in Germany. The world is big and beautiful and the two of us will have our little world somewhere to be happy together. How will it be when you are my wife, and how I look forward to it! Will you always be kind and good to me and never leave me? I will give you everything I own and my life shall be yours forver. How I long to see you, hold you, and kiss and kiss you.. if I would only be allowed to kiss your hand I would be insanely happy.

Please don't have that haircut, I love your braids so much and you look so good that way.

I shall end for now. Four to five hours of sleep an then off to work I go. Good night and sleep in peace. Best wishes to you my darling, and greetings to all your relatives and friends.

Your faithfull Otto