

[POSTCARD OF HEIDELBERG CASTLE, FROM HEIDELBERG, FEBRUARY 1968]

The Heidelberg Castle – the explanation for Larry’s broken foot. Note indicated Verboten area where young American man jump many feet & sprain foot!

Tif

Ps I have the most awful cold!!

February 5, 1968

Dear Everybody,

Here’s l’il Tiffy from Heidelberg. I guess Sally got her letter by now. Main reason for writing is you can now write to me at

*c/o Werner Spöre
30 Romerstrasse
69 Heidelberg, Germany*

Werner (a friend of Laura) doesn’t know it yet but he is soon to be deluged with 400 letters from America for us (we hope). Kitty’s burp is developing well (2 in a row). Anyway please write as home seems 482 million miles away and so does hot water & people who speak English & decent cigarettes. Take a hot shower right before you write, okay? Even while you write. Heidelberg is really beautiful. There is an old & new section. The old part is between mountains & filled with quaint little streets, ruined castles & wild woman landladies in pensions (European boarding house) such as the one we are at. Our landlady finds it impossible to believe we don’t speak German & babbles away at a fantastic rate at us while we keep going “Ja, ja” & smiling at her. We suspect she’s thrown us out a few times but we didn’t understand her well enuff to realize it. Anyway come February 11 we move back to the Youth hostel (a hideous place with no hot water run by a diabolical German computer) because it’s about 4 marks cheaper (\$1 a nite). You know how just everyone in Europe is supposed to speak English? Well, whoever said that didn’t have any contact with truck drivers or weird looking Iranian farmers (Larry & I crossed the Belgian-German border with them). Actually we have had several rides with French speaking people with whom I can communicate pretty well, oddly enuff. One French truck driver

we got was just a beautiful person & when times are hard I dream of spending the rest of my life driving all over Europe with him teaching him English & smoking nauseous French cigarettes. Kitty & I bought some butter today & it sure is good. Larry is able to walk now with some pain but we don't think we'll have to take him to the hospital after all. European eiderdowns are these great huge white things like marshmallows that sort of envelope you all over & sort of make you hope it doesn't gobble you up before morning. Germany is really a beautiful country – rolling green hills, black forests, little castles and villages – and is also very prosperous. We even went into this fantastic grocery store that even looked more fantastic than American ones (or else my memory of American ones has failed). There is a Univ. of Md. Extension here where we are applying for jobs. Also we saw a beautiful, cute adorable little puppy Pekinese in London. Also Ostend has hundreds of dogs (only good thing in city). Also don't send my money yet. Also please write. Loved your last letter. Love to all. Tiffy

Ps Please tell what happened in Winnie Winkle after Prince Jim got double vision!

February 7, 1968

Larry spreads bright red jelly on a very thin slice.

February 12, 1968

Dear Family,

The toilet paper in Britain is like wax paper. In Belgium it's like crepe paper. In Germany it's more like paper towels. What a world of variety we live in! Also, in Germany the toilet bowls are very weird. Inside the bowl is a sort of porcelain platform with a little hole at one end. Like so [drawing of top view of German toilet bowl] There is no water anywhere except in the hole. So all that you deposit therein is ready, all by itself, for your inspection when you are finished, there on the platform. When you flush it water rushes out and washes it all into the hole. The most overwhelming toilets were in Ostend. Flush – and you get a miniature Niagara Falls capable of sucking you away into the sewage. It became my practice to finish

using the toilet, jump up, open the door, get one hand on the door and one on the handle, then flush & run out as fast as possible.

We saw a student anti-Vietnam war, anti-American demonstration today. We were walking around shopping (K, L, & Me) when we heard a lot of chanting. We followed the sound down the street till we came upon several hundred students marching down the street carrying Viet Cong flags and posters reading “First Vietnam – Tomorrow the World,” “Vietcong win over America” and the like. They were chanting things like “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh”, followed by mobs of photographers and curious onlookers. They marched to a building called the Amerika Haus, got up on its porch and proceeded to make loud, guttural speeches whose meaning seemed to center around a general distrust of America in general and the Amerika Haus in particular. Meanwhile an older man fought his way up on the porch, broke one of the Viet Cong flags, caused a brief but exciting scuffle and shouts of “Polizei, Polizei”, and began to make a speech against the demonstrators. All we could catch was that he was from East Berlin and was for the war. It’s really an odd feeling being in a foreign country and seeing a demonstration against your own country. Grant it that the Vietnam war is a mistake (at least I think it is). But to these students the USA is nothing but the war. It has never done anything, to them, except enter the war in Vietnam and therefore should be completely condemned. It is unfair and foolish.

Larry’s broken foot caused us some great good fortune. It seems it got worse and worse so finally he decided he would have to go to the hospital for x-rays. Since I am the only one who knows any German, I was elected to get him there. We figured out where a hospital was and set out to get there, getting kind of lost in the process. Finally I just got desperate, grabbed the first person to walk by and said, “Do you speak English?” Well, he did. Not only that he was a young, beautiful, soft-voiced medical student with a beard. Not only that, he told us we were at the wrong kind of hospital, found out for us where we should be, drove us there, explained Larry’s injury to the admitting desk, and gave us his address. Then I wrote him a thank you note and he came and visited us at the pension and then got us all in free at the Club Storyville, a rock and roll dance club in town. It was really great. And it was odd. The band was German, knew no English, yet they sang all American and English rock phonetically, purely by imitating the sound of the words. But it was music and it was beautiful. And so is Ekalte (the student). Oh,

you wanted to hear more about Philip. He has some sort of very good job in advertising with the London Times, has lived in London most of his life, but has traveled quite a bit. He's quite intelligent, has lots of books & records and – lo & behold – a sense of humor which is comprehensible to Americans (most Europeans don't. Englishmen groove on puns, while Germans make very broad risqué remarks and then guffaw their heads off – usually at someone else's expense). He thinks Lars Toodlewagger is a scream, so we bought him a left artificial ear (they come in pairs – we kept the right one).

Germany is a truly remarkable, fascinating country. In many ways it is more like the States than either Britain or Belgium. The department stores are exactly like American ones, and the new parts of the cities could be Washington, D.C. or Baltimore, Md. (more than any English city). The autobahns could be the beltway. German people look fantastically like Americans. Most of all, the prosperity is very American. Lots of good cars, nice clothes, good food. But then on the other hand, you have the kind of picturesque scenery, quaint old hamlets, 15th century ruins, and little specialty shops that America could never have in a million years. I mean, this country has everything (except hot water). Oh, and another interesting thing are the vending machines. All over the city are machines dispensing everything from cheap Vino to film to fresh fruit to cosmetics to cigarettes. But – no vending machines for matches, cokes, candybars, or milk (like in Britain). Incidentally, we long ago ran out of American cigarettes and are now smoking Peter Stuyvesant or Kur Mark. Except Mike & Larry are rolling their own.

Did Sally tell you I got Ayesha: Return of She in London? I read it (in fact all of us did – we did a great deal of reading and gin rummy playing at Frau Von Buren's pension) and it was pretty good. Not as good as She but okay. Only I couldn't carry it & left it at the pension. But on the way home I'll stop back in London and buy another copy. Also, there is another book in the series called She and Allan. Buying books to read is, understandably enough, incredibly hard. For some strange reason, all the books on sale here seem to be in, of all things, German! So we have to bumble around trying to find stores with English books. If they have them, they turn out to be either classical sociological treatises (this is University town, remember), or else low grade mystery thrillers. But we're managing as well as we can. And we all read all the books we each have.

I am very thirsty right now. I am at the youth hostel freezing away in my bunk & wishing for a glass of water. Which does not exist in Europe. The only drinking water I've seen since I got to Europe (including Britain) was on the American military base here. People here just can't conceive of one being thirsty for water. Beer maybe. Cheap vino maybe. But not water. And it really drives you nuts. There is plenty of ice cold water here at the hostel, God knows. But that's to wash in. There are no cups or glasses to drink it with.

We think about American food a great deal. When I get home, please let's eat: roast chicken with dressing, mashed potatoes, celery stalks, rolls with salted butter, wonderful brewed coffee, and brownies. And let it all be hot. German food is 500% better than English food but is too expensive for us to buy usually. So we live on bread & salami. Which quickly begins to pale on one. One thing they have tons of are fancy pastries. Which look absolutely scrumptious, but when you eat them you find yourself wishing for plain old chocolate cake. And, more than anything, wishing for decent coffee. Oh God, for a decent cup of coffee.

I know the letters I'm sending are incomplete and unsatisfactory. But there's so much to say and so many letters to write. And so much you can't put into words. But Mama – if you ever decide to go to Europe, please see Germany. It's a beautiful, marvelous country, even in winter. And anyway, write all and give our address to everyone – even complete strangers!

Love,

Tif

February 19, 1968

I believe in the beauty of words but that isn't enough. I believe in the beauty and the incredible diversity of life but isn't enough either. There is no link by which I can that connect the two. Confronted with life, I am unable to make the words that describe it. Confronted with words, I am unable to find real meanings outside of their patterns. The harder I try to bridge the gap, the more I want to and ache to do it because that is what I must do, the more frustrated I become. Left without work, friends and diversions, I am left with what I am, a writer. But a writer who is now forced to admit that she is incapable of writing, who can no longer say, well I was too

busy, I had to do my Philosophy, or the apartment needed cleaning, or too many people were around. A writer writing nothing is nothing. I'd rather be just a housewife if I at least did housework. I would at least be fulfilling my purpose. And I am a writer. I come alive fully when I write. It's then that I'm totally awake and aware. If I were to give up writing it would not be because I decided I was, say, a teacher. I'm not a teacher or a wife or a librarian. To give up writing would be giving up myself or perhaps denying myself. I love words, how I love them, and there is no other way for me. Either a writer or a nothing, however else I may feel later.

My generation is a generation that cherishes eccentricity and originality; we love spontaneity and creativity. We are enthusiastic and we appreciate beauty, and, correspondingly, art and talent. We believe in instincts, love, and peace. We hate hypocrisy and assembly-line goals. Our poets are Bob Dylan and John Lennon, our prophets Timothy Leary and Frank Zappa. We are frank, crude and humorous - and yet we are sensitive and concerned. Our religion is freedom and nonconformity; we do not trust our parents because they don't understand. And our crime is that we can't understand them.

Our world is a world of wars and newspapers and art movies; peace marches and television and music; acid and philosophy and mass produced automobiles. And money. There is lots of it and we know it. Who has it, how it gets around and what it has to do with Wall Street is beyond us. But we know that if we need it, it can be had - it's just a question of how, how soon, and how much. We use it largely to increase our exposure to our world because exposure is what we groove on. Money as an end is becoming incomprehensible to us; our lack is for another end. Mine is an entire generation of people already provided with the comforts and even luxuries of life. Our worldly wants are satisfied and, as one, we contemplate our lives and find mankind's traditional goals already attained for us. We become a generation of philosophers all in search of new goals and we become confused, frustrated, and disillusioned en masse. I have seen the ones who turn to drugs, who spend 3/4 of their time planning, scoring, selling and taking dope and I have seen the ones who become caught in this snare of drugs in most unromantic and not even disgusting ways. I have seen the people who turn to angry, militant protest, raising their voices in a dozen committees that must

think they are accomplishing something because maybe they are. I have seen the ones who close their eyes to the new challenge of “no-goal” and join the Establishment to fight for it. I have seen the ones who become professional freaks and trade on their ability to baffle, bemuse and amuse others who were little concerned with the freaks’ real value. I have seen the professional homosexuals, the professional students, the student senate majors and the professional sophisticates. I have seen the aspiring artists, writers, musicians and poets, I have seen them trading on their hopes and not their efforts. And I have seen the hangers-on, who are most professional of all, who know the dress, the phrases and the slogans far better than the rest because that is all they know and all they need to know.

I have studied them all, because I study people. I have loved their love, enthusiasm, humor, spontaneity and zeal. I have been fascinated by their causes, their ideals and their hopes. But they have given me no answers. Only more questions.