

[1/1] My Beloved, this year 20 years have passed, [1/2] if my memory serves me right, [1/3] since you left Lwow, and also since we [1/4] last said goodbye. I remember so well [1/5] those last weeks you spent in Lwow and [1/6] our conversations and my own sorrow and sadness. [1/7] Today, my hair is turning gray, and I smile at my [1/8] remembrances of you, my dear, faraway friend. [1/9] I have no hope that we will meet again—it's good [1/10] that from time to time I can find out something [1/11] about you and that I can also write you a couple of words about myself—[1/12] it's good to know that you're alive and that you are¹. [1/13] These things give me certainty in life...² [1/14] I'm glad that the books brought you much [1/15] pleasure. *Kaleidoscope* comes in a nice edition and [1/16] I think that it will interest you not only because of your sentiments [1/17] toward the author. Why did I send you [1/18] Brandys's novella? He's a young postwar author. I especially [1/19] like *The Red Hat*. The book is from the period of the [1/20] "thaw"—a period that took place [1/21] roughly two years ago—when our literature began to [1/22] free itself from "directives" and "commands", when a freer critique of the status quo [1/23] began, when we began to write openly about [1/24] what's happening, [1/25] about what we think, without pink glasses. [1/26] If Brandys doesn't seem different to you—he actually is [1/27] different. After the war we learned to use words and [1/28] turns of phrase unknown 20 years ago. [1/29] My dear friend, I could spend weeks [1/30] talking to you, in telling you

[2/1] about everything that's so hard to describe in writing, and I would [2/2] explain how very much things have changed, and how we have to [2/3] be different than we were before the war. I'd tell you about [2/4] our own "October Revolution", about the "Polish October" of '56³, [2/5] I'm sure you've read and heard something about it—it [2/6] coincided with your own elections which [2/7] you followed with such lively interest. These times are [2/8] long past—the intense pressure, [2/9] anticipation, hope—happiness and uncertainty. We'd spend [2/10] hours by the radio, we read [2/11] all the newspapers, magazines, weeklies. [2/12] We had time for nothing else. You know, it was a bit [2/13] like as if suddenly a window was thrown open in a big [2/14] room that had been suffocating you—and [2/15] you breathed in the fresh mountain air [2/16] that intoxicated you like wine. Never before did I write [2/17] about current events to you. The [2/18] correspondence with you and yours [2/19] itself was, in a way, an act of courage; I [2/20] had to weigh each word, so that the letter would reach the [2/21] addressee and would not elicit unpleasant [2/22] consequences for the sender.⁴ The fact that I'm recalling this to [2/23] you now, freely, and without fear means [2/24] for me, for us, a lot. We [2/25] are a poor, decimated country and I

¹ Or, "that you exist."

² The rest of the sentence is illegible.

³ The statement is most likely a reference to the beginning of the intellectual "thaw".

⁴ Censors had great power and could punish rebellion against the regime with jail terms, death sentences, or time in Siberia.

[2/26] don't anticipate that we will quickly enrich ourselves. [2/27] At the same time I know well that my own [2/28] modest living conditions cannot change for the [2/29] better—but there is...⁵ hope. [2/30] I can't stand an atmosphere of lying and compulsion and [2/31] I hope that things won't go back to that [2/32-33] but it's not easy and a host of new problems are popping up...⁶ [3/1] Despite all of this, I have always been an optimist, [3/2] I believe that we've entered a better path. [3/3] I am ...⁷ and I'm dreaming [3/4] of a vacation, which I'd like to spend, again, [3/5] in the mountains. For now things are not yet coming [3/6] together favorably. I would like to leave, [3/7] as always, in June. In my office at work a [3/8] lot has changed. For the longest time I had very [3/9] little work and that greatly irritated me—[3/10] if there were the possibility, I'd willingly change jobs. [3/11] But it's not easy to get positions in offices [3/12] here, so I keep quiet. I have to think about my [3/13] retirement! At home things are so-so. Mom had an accident [3/14-15] last winter and spent a few weeks nursing her broken ribs. She is very weak [3/16] and...⁸ [3/17] She needs a lot of [3/18] care and attention, like a child. My sister keeps going [3/19] just like in the old days, she even got a promotion recently. [3/20] Wanda my friend with whom we lived has worked [3/21] as the directory/secretary of a scientific [3/22] quarterly for the Hirschfeld Institute. [3/23] As I've already mentioned, we live [3/24] very modestly...⁹ Winter [3/25] was mild and warm—without snow; [3/26] we had enough coal.¹⁰ But spring [3/27] was so ... that I'm still burning coal in the [3/28] furnace. My frequent trips to Warsaw have [3/29] stopped—I haven't been there in 8 months. [3/30] I recently visited Gosia's mother. She is gravely [3/31] sick and I'm worried about her, because she's so [3/32] ...¹¹ My brother is going through some [4/1] struggles. During his stay, February this [4/2] year, he had a heart attack, and he spent [4/3] two weeks with us. It was a very hard [4/4] period for me. But you know, despite this, our lives are [4/5] peaceful. Constantly, on a daily basis, there is something going on, and then [4/6] you find yourself wondering why you don't have [4/7] time for anything, for example, to write to you. But health-wise [4/8] I feel well. This despite the fact that I still haven't touched the B12 Vitamins [4/9] you sent me. You asked me to [4/10] tell you if I need you to send me anything. [4/11] I'm only doing this, because you asked, because, to tell you the truth, [4/12] I don't really need anything. And you've done so much [4/13] for me already, that I'll never be able to [4/14] repay you. It seems to me Willy that you'd have [4/15] the least trouble sending me money through [4/16] "Polska Kasa Opieki SA"—and I'd pick from [4/17] their warehouses whatever I might [4/18] need.¹² Specifically, I need a sweater for

⁵ Illegible

⁶ Last word of the sentence is illegible.

⁷ Illegible

⁸ This part is illegible, except for the part in parentheses which states that Ms. Manelska's mother was 75 years old at the time.

⁹ The rest is illegible

¹⁰ Coal was the main source of heat in Poland at that time.

¹¹ Illegible, but it is fairly clear that whatever was said was negative.

¹² Polska Kasa Opieki, PKO, also referred to as PEKAO was during the communist years, and even now still is, the largest Polish bank.

[4/19] winter—wool is expensive and hard to [4/20] find. I have no idea what's reasonable for you, if this [4/21] turns out to be too much, for \$5 I [4/22] could purchase a half kilo of yarn. The address of the [4/23] bank (Polska Kasa Opieki) PEKAO Trading [4/24] Corporation, 25 Broad Street Room 443, [4/25] New York, New York. Coffee we can now [4/26] purchase here, we drink it seldom, and so, for Mom's [4/27] needs, we still have enough. The tariffs here are generally lower [4/28] than they were before. However, it seems [4/29] to me that PEKAO will be [4/30] the most convenient for you.

[4/31] I'm glad that everything is going well with you guys, [4/32] that's what counts, that you're all healthy. [4/32] All of your pictures bring a smile to my face—I haven't seen you guys in [4/33] such a long time.

[5/1] I still have a lot to tell you about and I [5/2] have many questions, but this letter is already quite long, [5/3] and it's getting late—I have to finally wrap [5/4] up. I frequently think of you—if you've [5/5] changed, if it would take us long to acclimate [5/6] ourselves if, by [5/7] some miracle, we'd meet. [5/8] It's strange that we knew each other for such a [5/9] short time—a year, maybe two?—but our bond [5/10] will probably never break. [5/11] Stay healthy, my dear, faraway best friend. [5/12] Shower Hilde with kisses and the kids [5/13] and send them my greetings. I'll send you [6/1] another book, maybe some pictures of the Tatra Mountains—you [6/2] always did like the mountains.

[6/3] Stay healthy and write again sometime

[6/4] To

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[6/5] The most sincere greetings from my mother, sister [6/6] and Wanda.

[6/7] We got a another dog, a little one, black— [6/8] a little “mutt”—she's a very nice [6/9] little “lady”.