

29 Januar 1990

Dopornii Dabug Nebobar,

Your letter from Kiev sounds like a Weissenberg story. I hope you are slowly recovering from the revolutionary atmosphere of the fin de siècle Ukraine. I was so happy to receive that letter and I am sorry we cannot meet and talk about your impressions and experiences.

I visited Kiev twice in the seventies and my impressions were similar to yours, but of course I didn't have a chance to meet the Jewish community or even Russians or Ukrainians. Your visit must have been much more interesting because you could see a number of things from the inside; I was just an average tourist. What I remember very well, though, something that you couldn't see because it is seasonal was a beach on the Dnieper: hundreds of people lying on big white sheets or camping beds and sunbathing in their underwear, men with white caps of hats (like chiefs or 19th cent. doctors) on their heads. It looked like a huge open-air hospital or sanatorium, but the people, contrary to those I would meet on the bus or in the subway, looked quite happy and relaxed. Anyway, a good scenery for a story or a play (Pechet or Pinter, preferably). As to the appearance of some Russian women, my father developed a passion for taking photos of them (Odessa 1970) on the beach and they gladly served as models. My father has always been fond of plump ladies but in Odessa the reality

far surpassed his bravest expectations.

Your letter arrived on Thursday (today is Monday) and on Friday we received the sweet surprise. Thank you ever so much for the sweet beginning of the year (Martin is a Donald-Duck-chewing-pum-fan) but you really shouldn't send us anything. But, on the other hand, we were touched with your kindness and thinking about us. I am going to eat everything myself immediately to keep up with the Olesca beach standards of beauty!

About a week ago I sent a long letter, I hope you've received it by now and maybe have made up your mind about your visit to Ireland. I was even thinking of your possibility of coming with Angek but maybe it would be too strenuous for both you and Mum, especially since you want to travel a bit. Martin didn't suffer from the jet-leg too much but it certainly affected his sleeping habits and it took about 3-4 days for him to get used to a different time. Anyway, please try to come.

I wonder whether you've seen The Enemies Zachary Baker has seen it and quite liked it. I wonder whether Singer himself will be able to see and enjoy (or distill it)

Love to all of you

Alvin & Co.