

New Years Eve 1985

Dear Wendy and Bob,

What a delightful surprise to find a package from you in our mail box a couple of days before Christmas. Thank you! Thank you for those beautiful warm socks. Since they reach clear up to my knees I can wear them over my long Johns and look fashionable and keep warm when I go shopping.

Wouldn't you know. The first winter in Idaho has had record lows. It started snowing the middle of November (early) and since then we have had 4 to 8 inches covering the ground as well as a 2 inch sheet of ice covering most parking lots and side streets and sidewalks. The main thoroughfares are used enough so that the traffic melts the ice on them about half of the time but there is always ice on the sidestreets. We use "ice-walkers" when we take walks around the neighborhoods and wear or vibram soled snowboots to town. Everyone dresses practically here except for a few natives? who walk around hatless even when the wind-chill is down to 5 above. Jack is getting used to driving on the icy roads and we're now used to bundling up everytime we go out to get the mail or to empty the garbage. Normally this area gets a good proportion of sunny days in the wintertime but not this winter (they knew we were coming and so threw the new records at us to see if we'd give up and go back to where we came from). Like most of the Western states Idaho has been sitting under a thick

cloud cover for weeks. An unusual weather pattern they say.

We took our snowshoes out in the country last month and practiced walking in soft snow of about a foot in depth. We enjoyed the experience and found it wasn't difficult to manage the snowshoes. Last Sunday we had a chance to try out cross-country skiing at a State Park about 30 miles south of here. A local sports shop lent skis and poles and boots to beginners free of charge for 30 minutes. Jack had never been on skis before and it had been 40 years since I had skied as a teenager. (What a difference in equipment these days. I remember wooden skis and heavy leather boots). I managed to make it around the short loop without a fall and Jack only fell down twice. Everyone was helpful and there were other beginners our age so we didn't feel too out-of-place. We plan to keep our eyes open this summer for some used ski outfits at the 1986 garage sales. We need some kind of winter activity which will encourage us to get out into the country for some aerobic exercise. There will be a couple more Sundays this winter when we will be able to use the equipment free of charge. After that we hope we will have had enough practice to make it practical to rent some equipment for a day of practice.

We bought a \$2.00 permit to cut a tree in the National Forest a couple of weeks ago and so, for the first time in

our lives, we drove out into the country and tramped through the snow drifts to find and cut our own Christmas tree. It was a 6-footer with a nice shape and trimmed with all the balls and fruit and animals and snowmen and elves and garlands of gold foil (bought last summer at yard sales) it turned out to be one of the prettiest trees I've put up.

I'm back working on my novel again! I was pleased to discover that the long vacation from working on it didn't set me back too much. It was easy to pick up where I left off and I was able to read through what I had finished (2nd draft) with a fresh mind and find transitions that needed improving. I also found that I had forgotten much of the material I had written. This helped stimulate me and encourage me to keep plugging. I remember reading Suzuki Roshi lectures he had given at my home in Los Altos and which I had collected into the preliminary version of Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind. He kept saying, as I read him different lectures: "Did I say that? That is very good!" There are times when a poor memory is a blessing.

I hope you will be able to give up your apartment soon and move fulltime into your house. One of the best things about our life now is that we have everything together in one place. There were years and years when we kept part of our belongings at the cabin in Big Sur and the other part stored in town. Constant shuffling back and forth uses up too much time and energy that can be put to better use.

Jack and I send our best wishes to you all for a productive and gratifying 1986.

Lore Mason Jack