

Auschwitz, 4.26.44

My dear, sweet *Butzel*!

Once in a while there's a small ray of light in my bleak daily routine in this concentration camp business. This afternoon at 4pm I was ordered to the commanding officer, and I was awarded a medal (*Kriegsverdienstkreuz*, second degree with swords). Even though this is not a rare honor, and even though I already possess more valuable decorations, I was touched by the acknowledgment of my work and my dedication. My work sometimes jeopardizes my own health and even my life; therefore I was very appreciative. (You can see my dear *Butzele* that the medals are coming in slowly one after another to stay on this hero's chest!!) I was supposed to get it on 4.20.44, the Führer's birthday, but I wasn't here since I was home with you. Dr. Thilo got the same honor; we now call it the "typhus medal."

When I came back they were already waiting for me with 3 bottles of wine and one bottle of champagne. I was with a group of nice people (Fischer, Frank, Mulsow, plus their wives), and we drank whatever we had. During our gathering I also raised a glass to Rolf and his lovely mother.

I'm doing okay so far. My work is going ahead, but I've decided that I want to be altogether more reclusive. Berlin doesn't suit me. I'm feeling better now, but after the long hours on the train my legs were swollen. I will check myself into the field hospital later for a thorough examination. Berlin was quite cold. Especially nurse Emmi took good care of me. Schade used every moment of his free time to be around me. With my boss, I could talk about everything.

I have already mentioned my visit to Lambertz to you. He is still the same: He pretends to be audacious, but in reality he is just shy and inhibited. He still hasn't found a nice girl, even though he has a casual relationship with a waitress. (Please keep this to yourself, and never, ever let him know that I told you!) I want to introduce him to Schlicks. Maybe Mrs. Schlick can introduce him to nice girls that she knows or something like that! How are you, *Butzele*, and how is the boy? I hope everything is just fine. I'm sending kisses from me to both of you.

Yours, Papili.