

Veldhuis, Zwiertje Rutgers to
her father and mother

U.S.A. - the Netherlands
Letter, 1848

Dearly beloved father and mother,

We hope everything is well with you and that you are in good health. The wish and desire of my heart is that the Lord is your shepherd and provider. Yes, my beloved ones, if we could not go to the Lord with the desires of our heart and if we daily could not give our troubles to Him and trust Him with them, what sorrow and woe that would be. I am writing to let you know that our Natje died and that she had an easy, peaceful death, of which I am pleased to say as the Lord's man Job said, I still can and may say and do say "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Yes, my dear ones, if we do not continually have the Lord in our hearts and if misfortune befalls us, then there is trouble and sorrow, yes, if I did not have the Lord in my heart then I would surely die of sorrow. Now I am thankful because the Lord says in His word that to those who are born again in Him, he gives courage and comfort in trials. Oh, my dear people, I must also write that the Lord is keeping watch over me and strengthens me through His word and spirit. Yes, beloved ones, I cannot tell you how good the Lord is to me, yes, that I also through this trial call upon the name of the Lord, and in return He blessed me. When the wicked multiply, perhaps they will say, "If she believes that way, then _____." Yes, dearly beloved, that I accomplish by His word and spirit.

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Also, loved ones, that the Lord may change your hearts by the working of His word and spirit, if He has not yet already done so, yes, that is the wish and prayer of my heart and also that the Lord also _____ and also that the Lord says "amen" upon his actions. Dearly beloved, my wish is that I could see the Lord's face immediately - the Lord compares us to a flower in the field, that today is here and tomorrow is gone. The Lord says in His word that we should be ready at all times to go to our heavenly home, because we are all going to die. Oh, my dear parents and friends, that we together might meet at the feet of the Lord, He calls us in His word to come to Him. He says in His word that He still is standing with outstretched arms to welcome us to Him and that whosoever will may come and drink of the water of life freely. Dear friends, everything is not perfect on earth, but the heavenly city will be perfect, the city which the Lord Himself built will be without imperfections.

[Now concerning] The letter which the Dominee wrote for me telling that the Lord took my beloved and dear husband from me and the cross which I had to bear in the death of our little Willemina (because of weakness). At that time I could not write myself, because they were ill for a long time and sometimes a little better, and then again a little worse. My

husband had a fever at first, and then he was very sick, also when He got a little better (when his conditions improved) then the doctor always said, "Veldhuis, you must not eat much." But he didn't quite agree with that advice. He felt that if the food tasted so good, then it surely wouldn't harm him. Yes, often I pleaded with him concerning this, but all to no avail. At the end he had a diarrhea of which there was no end. Our Natje and our Mietje also had this same condition. The doctor said the liver of our Natje was nearly ruined, then we consulted another doctor. He agreed, but said she could get better (regain her health). Yet _____ and our Mietje they said it came from her teeth, so that we had to pay more than one hundred and fifty.

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I have received your letter which you sent to me with Peters. In it I read that you were all healthy and well, which makes me happy and thankful. Also that this letter will find you in good health. You wrote asking if we have already purchased land and if we are settled. I can write a little. We have purchased 160 acres _____. My husband was very happy and he also was very happy in the way of the Lord. He would have preferred to have accomplished more things here on earth, but the Bible says, "My ways are not your ways and your ways are not my ways." We can clearly see this. We are now in our house that the Lord allowed us to build, which we could not do of our own strength. When it was ready, we moved in. Then they were in reasonably good health. The doctor said we should move there into the new house - our Mietje was the worst then. My husband went outside with the carpenter in the daytime and was then thankful for the Lord's blessings. Our Natje was also feeling reasonably well then. At that time she even went to Plasmons a time or two.

Dearly beloved and highly respected father and mother, brothers and sisters, we hope this finds you in good health

Through the blessing of the Lord we are still well. Our Mannes and our Gerdina are also very healthy. Our Mannes goes to school, he's beginning to read the Bible. Also I'll write more about our living conditions here. We are working further on our house. Our hired man with the oxen and three extra men gather the fallen trees together to burn them. Because planting and sowing time was more urgent, we could not complete the burning. We planted an acre or five of corn, which people in Holland call Tuerkse Uitwijte. An an acre of oats, one of grass, two of buckwheat, and two of potatoes, all of which are even beautiful, splendid crops. And now we plan to plant an acre or six of witweidte. If the Lord in his graciousness allows us to burn more trees for cropland

It will cost us just as much as to chop it down. And yet I cannot omit telling you that I am happy in the way of the Lord that brought me here to this country. Thus far I am not in want. This was not true in the Netherlands. America is a land flowing with milk and honey. If our ancestors could see how we burn trees here, it would be unbelievable to them.

Dear beloved father & mother, Written by Zwierte Rutgers - 1848

We hope everything is well with you & that you are in good health. The wish & desire of my heart is that the Lord is your shepherd & provider. Yes, my beloved ones, if we could not go to the Lord with the desires of our heart & if we daily could not give our troubles to Him & trust Him with them, what sorrow & woe there would be. I am writing to let you know that our Natje died & that she had an easy, peaceful death, of which I am pleased to say as the Lord's ^{man} Job said, "I still can & may say & do say 'The Lord has given & the Lord has taken away, Blessed be the name of the Lord.'" Yes, my dear ones, if we do not continually have the Lord in our hearts & if misfortune befalls us, then there is trouble and sorrow, yes, if I did not have the Lord in my heart (love the Lord) then I would surely die of sorrow. Now I am thankful because the Lord says in His word that ^{+ comfort} those who are born again in Him, he gives courage. In trials, oh, my dear people, I must also write that the Lord is keeping watch over me & strengthens me through His word and spirit. Yes, beloved ones, I cannot tell you how good the Lord is to me, yes, that I also from through this trial call upon the name of the Lord, in return He blesses me. When the wicked multiply, perhaps they will say, "If she believes that way, then yes, dear, beloved, that I accomplish by His word & spirit."

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