

Stieltjeskanaal, Nov 12, "40

Dear Jeannette,

How do you do? I am very well. As you see I am back at my birth-place, at my parents house. Perhaps you are very anxious to get a sign of live from me. I am very happy. I can tell you that my brother and I we both are back at home; that I am able to write you a letter. I hope you will receive it.

Your letter reached me in the beginning of March, but at that time we were so very busy, I had very little spar time.

In the last of April we left our garrison and started for a town nearer to the German frontier.

And then 10 Mai, never I shall forget that day.

Just when Nature awoke. The fields were coloured by buttercups and dandelions. The cold winter which its snow was gone. The days were longing. The sun was shining brightly. New life was comming. It was as the German poet Weine ouce said in one of his poems; In wunderschonen Monat Mai, als alle knospen sprangen, da ist in meinem Herzen die hiele anfggegangen.

But with new life, came dead and ruin. Bombs were sown about the Dutch towns. So came war over the Netherlands.

Some days before I feeld it, it was like a rest which comes often before the storm.

In the morning of 10 Mai the German air planes passed the frontiers and bombed the Dutch flying-grounds, and it was war. A war which lasted only five days for the Netherlands, but in that five days, we have seen so very much, that I can not write it you and also I will not.

Several dutch soldiers gave their life for their country. They fight five days long like lions, five days and five nights without sleeping, without rest, nearly without eatening. But it was all in vain. The Netherlands army was splendid. The boys they all were heros. But the German splendid army was to mighty. The Germans were also heros. It is not to believe so heroic as they were.

Poor soldiers, they have done their duty. It is the soldiers duty to starve for their country when it is necessary and I should have done the same when it was oblided, but I thank God that it was not oblided.

Poor women, poor children who lost their live, their husband, their father.

Poor civilians, who lost their live by the bombards of Rotterdam.

The most cruel sight is that the civilians are oblided to leave their house for the storm which is going over the country. They had to leave all what was their so lovely, children, women, gray-men; they take with them what they can; eaten, blankets, a little dog, a poor lovely little cat. You see columns from five, six thousand fugitives.

You see it, you think at your parents, perhaps so they are also flying. You think at your own brother, which is also fighting for the country, you do know where he is, does he life, or is he already dead.

You do your duty, your help where you can. Poor women crying children, you do not think at sleeping, at eating, you don't know what day it is

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That was Weitsuntride 1940 for the Netherlands

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But their came an end. And their came days that we could clear away the ruins,
that we could bring our dear friends
Rotterdam. Thirty thousand men worked eight months to clean away the heaps
of rubbish. It costed 5 million dollars.

When you see this, you do not understand how it is possible! War, where
for I hate it more than ever.

Let us hope that it will never come back.

At present I am back at house for a two month. In the beginning I could
not write to you. Forgive me that I waited so long. But I know you understand
me.

My brother is also back. I thank God that we both may return to our
parents. We both were not hurt in the war; but a cousin of me lost his left arm. A
man of twenty-nine years; married for three years and he has child from nine
months

I would I was by you. Where I could forget it all for sometimes, but helas
it is not so.

I try to study, in the beginning it was hopeless, at present it is going a
little better. I hope Jeannette, that you will write me a long letter. Your letters
are such a comfort for me. I understand your letters. You feel like I feel.

Write soon, please.

I end my letter with a poem:

Perhaps you are feeling pretty low
Don't be discouraged friend;
For everything that starts, you know,
Must surely sometimes end,
You feel just like a worm, its true
But why be always glum!
Remember what the worm will do -
Perhaps your turn will come!

Brien

Now I close Jeannette, wish my best wishes for you and your family.

Greetings

Your Dutch boy

Herm.

H. Roelof

Stieltjeskanaal 4

Gem (Den?), Dalen

Wieste (Drenthe?)