

Oa, Ponape
Feb. 7, '51

My dear little Mother, my only brother, Roger, and my baby Sister,

How I would like to be with you that we might all comfort one another in our sorrow! To us here, so far removed from you all, it still seems possible that there may be some mistake and that after all we may find out that daddy is still with you but according to the pink paper that is on the table before me here, he is gone before us into Glory! For him, what joy--what a relief, but for us who loved him--a heavy heart and tears. Indeed I have been comforted and kept from despair because I, as you, know that to him has been given the better part. Perhaps our parting is not for long for do we not all expect to see His face soon and join that crowd around His throne?

(He wrote in Kolonia yesterday)

As Chet probably told you, we received a dispatch from the Board here at Oa on our Monday which would have been your Sunday. We had been in Kolonia for the long weekend when we had a convention but returned here to Oa on Sunday afternoon. Monday a boat came out from Kolonia and Chet was given an envelope with copra money and a small slip of paper which he did not notice until he had tossed the envelope away. The paper proved to be the dispatch. He read it as he told you thinking that it was his mother. When the meaning dawned on him he hurried up to me. I was bringing in coffee off the line while our supper was cooking in the oven. He seemed to be in a hurry and told me to come in. Then rather excitedly he shut the door and sat down to show me a piece of paper which he said ~~that~~ had come with the copra money. I thought that it was a paper concerning some boxes which had come in on a ship that day. I thought that perhaps it was some boxes which have gone astray. You can see how unprepared I was for the news it contained. Chet may have mentioned in his letter just what the dispatch said but if you didn't know just what the Board would send this is what I read " Mrs. Terpstra Father died Saturday stop Mother wishes eable reply stop Deep sympathy American Board" I don't know how many times I read it before I was sure of what the words were trying to say. Then I came to the conclusion that it could only mean daddy. Of course, this was a shock as we have had no word of any illness although we have all known for a long time that dad worked too hard and was often too tired. It is hard to ~~wait~~ wait to know the when, where, how etc. but that is all I can do. The dateline on the dispatch is Boston, Mass 9:25am Feb. 3 which means that you must have contacted Boston early on Saturday morning which would have meant that daddy must have passed away in the early hours of the morning in order to have been on Saturday which was Feb. 3.

In his letter, Chet has told you how he tried three different methods--canoe with motor, boat with motor, canoe with sail, and would have tried the pom-pom but it was suck on the reef--to go to Kolonia right that evening. When he couldn't get into Kolonia that evening I was at least glad to have him with me. While he was down trying to go I had taken our evening chapel service and had talked on daddy's death and the uncertainty of life. The students had not heard the news so were impressed and listened well. At least two girls were in tears before the service was over and I think that it was because they were ^{thinking} thinking. I would like to have been able to have talked with them personally but asked our house mother to instead as she, of course, speaks their language.

Chet went in planning to see the commanding officer in regard to any possibility of my getting transportation out but the communica-

tion officier though whom he sent the cable seemed to think that there wasn't much possibility as did several others whom he talked to. This of course is in regard to Navy transportation. If I should really need to get out the Navy would see that I got to Guam. Pan American has planes leaving Guam ~~from~~ for Honolulu twice a week as I recall. Then of course from Honolulu there are planes to the coast everyday so the possibility of transportation is not the big question. Latley we have been having a plane down about every week. However, with commercial lines there is of course the cost to consider as there is with Navy transportation but of course, commercial lines are more expensive and more demanding as to paying in advance etc. We would perhaps have money for such a trip if we did not keep all of our money in use in the work here. We have not spent a great deal of our allotment on our selves but we have kept it all in use in the work so at the present we would not have funds to start out on a trip to the states. Then too Chet looked up in our Board Handbook when he got to Kolonia and he saw that neither of us can leave the field without the Board's permission. This is of course, a wise rule as the Board couldn't just let all its missionaries hop off all over the world on their own inclination. If I should leave however, permission could be secured I am sure by cable without a great loss of time.

We interpreted the phrase "mother wishes cable reply" as meaning that you wondered if I might be able to come. Due to the above mentioned difficulties I am just waiting now to hear more from you. I am waiting to hear if this was as sudden for you as it was for me. I am wondering how you are adjusting to this new turn in your life and whether I am needed to help at this difficult time. I am anxious to know about your financial condition and what provision is being made in regard to the business. I have tried to imagine who may be your advisors and helpers and have prayed that the Lord may have given you all strength and wisdom in all things.

At present, of course, I am needed here on the field but one must always decide where they are needed most. Of course, humanly speaking I love you all more than the people or the work here but the Lord has asked us to love Him more than all and as this is where He has placed me at this time I must stay in the place of His appointment until He makes another course plain. I know that the Lord is able to be a greater strength to you all than I could be and His wisdom is able to guide you without my assistance but Of course I do long to be with you all.

Roger, how I do hope that you will take my place as the oldest in the family. Since you are the boy, you are now the rightful head of the family and I do trust that you will help mother and do all you can. Legally, you will not be a man until Sept. 11 but the Lord has seen fit to make you a man a bit early. I will never forget the day of your birth and how pleased your father was to have a son. I waited at Strombergs for daddy to come back from the hospital and being a little girl then, not realizing how important it is that every family have a boy, I wanted daddy to say that I had a little sister, to play dolls with me I guess. Well he was beaming all over and as proud as could be, when he announced that he had a son, and I a baby brother. Now Roger, you are not a baby but a man and the head of the family as daddy had hoped you would be. I know that he would be pleased to know that you are fulfilling all his hopes. I am praying for you daily that the Lord will help you to be the kind of a son that daddy was thinking about when beamed all over the place that morning of Sept. 11th, 1930.

It is hard to write to you as words in black and white seem so cold, so stiff, so formal but I do trust that you will know that my thoughts and prayers are with you constantly. We will do all we can to help you in all the ways we can. Let us know your affairs and your needs. Mom you all are always welcome in my home where ever it is and should you desire to come to stay with us here I would start action in that direction if you felt so lead. I do hope that something may be done in regard to daddy's business as it certainly would be a shame to have it a total loss. One of the things I mentioned in one of my letters (the one to daddy) was the fact that I thought he might be able to sell his business. He has a fair amount of equipment and some real assets.

How comforting it has been to know that the Lord has planned this all for the best. A couple of weeks ago the words for a poem came to my mind and I wrote them down on a piece of paper which is in Kolonia. I don't remember all that I put down but it started something like this.

The Lord has planned the way ahead,
I need not doubt or fear,
But only clasp His mighty hand
And sense that He is near.

I know not what the future holds
Of ~~suffering~~ and of pain, → sorrow
As God in perfect wisdom works
This wayward child to train.

Little did I think then as the words came to my mind that the "sorrow" would mean that daddy was soon to leave us. Then as I tried to go to sleep the other night after getting the news the last verse to the words of a little poem (which came to me New Year's Eve) came to my mind. I am including this poem and you will readily see that as poetry it isn't great but when it came to me I was so tired after Christmas, so weary of the rush of life, and also feeling sick with that flu and sore mouth which I had then, that the last verse was the the most fervent of them all. Daddy has certainly found that perfect rest.

Now I am hoping that I may be able to get this into Kolonia for the plane which is supposed to come tomorrow. I will be anxiously waiting for news of you. It was been over three weeks since I heard from you. Please keep writing as I will want to know of all your doings. I can hardly hope for a letter on this plane written since Saturday but an older letter may cast some light.

This letter is inadequate, I know, as it cannot express the feelings of my heart.

Nadyne, I know that you will try to be a comfort and help to mother. Try to be brave and be a big girl. Keep busy at school and helping in the house and you will find that it is easier. I think that I loved daddy as much as any of you but I find it easier to keep cheerful if I keep busy about the things which are my duty.

Love and prayers for you all,

Margery

P.S.
The figure that our message should have reached you by your Tuesday - early morning. Here a day minus 5 hours ahead