

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

November 9, 1990

I arrived here ten days ago. As JFK would have probably said if he came here, "Ich bin ein un Omahameon," or something like that. When I left New York it was thirty seven degrees. I landed here and it was eighty (We talk about the weather a lot here, sort of like New Yorkers talking about real estate. No conversation is truly complete without some reference to the weather and some prediction for the future, "Guess it's going to be fifty below tonight Mavis.")

Diane, the babies and I settled into her parents home where we have just about taken over with all of our paraphernalia and baby things. Everyone has helped and its great to have a half dozen extra hands to hold the babies. Madeline and Kerry are adjusting to life without car alarms and air they can't see. They are still the cutest and fussiest babies imaginable. Kerry has discovered that she can turn over from her tummy to her back but when she gets there she realizes she hates it and goes nuts until Mommy or Daddy turn her over again. This is all very amusing except she loves this trick between the hours of 1 and 5 AM. She also has developed a wonderful sort of growl that leads us to believe she may be possessed. We may have to look into exorcism.

All of our earthly goods are in a place called the Storage Cave. The woman took my out of state check with a smile. Little things like that make this a very easy place to live. All I have to remember is to talk slowly and enunciate. I can tell when people don't understand me. They get this funny expression on their face and wonder if I'm speaking Serbo-Croatian.

I still haven't quite figured out what I'll be doing here. I'm in the process of making contacts. Things here do tend to take a long time so I suspect it may be awhile before that comes together. In the meantime I'm developing a businessplan for the Omaha Yiddish Theater (Der Folksbine Omaha - Our first production will be "The Dybek" starring Kerry).

My only crisis so far has been finding decent rye bread and dealing with the car culture. The concept of driving everywhere is a bit unnerving and anytime the car makes a squeak or some other unfamiliar noise I suspect it'll blow up. I told Diane she is in charge of all car related issues. As for finding decent rye bread you'd be shocked for what passes for bread in this town. Most of it is similiar to the sponge in your kitchen sink. I was bemoaning this to my new found friends at the health food store (the only place you can get kasha and organic veggies and isn't 45,000 square feet of every variety of mesquite potato chip ever made) and they said they'd bake some. This could be a breakthrough in Omaha cusine. I'll find out later today when I pick some up.

We miss everybody a big bunch and think of New York often. The local newspaper publishes only the worst about New York. They make the Post look intellectual. We're already on the Sunday New York Times list at th newstand. You'd be surprised at how many copies they sell out here. I think people like to read the ads for the housing prices and sit back an gloat.

Love,

Seth, Diane and wah-wah from Madeline & Kerry

P.S. Our address is: 4904 Sunset Dr., Ralston, Ne. 68127
402-331-4887

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

November 30, 1990

Busy day. Spent the afternoon attaching my gun rack to the pickup. ONLY JOKING. I still have terrible vehicle phobia and am still a long way off from the purchase of a pick up truck let alone a gun rack. The truth is I spent most of yesterday driving around in the freezing rain. That is after I spent 45 minutes deicing the windshield. Those 45 minutes really made me miss all those death defying taxi rides I had taken in New York. At the end of the day I got a flat, after skidding into a stop sign (No damage to me or the car though the stop sign at 41st and Cummings is now at a 75 degree angle - the only damage was the flat tire). It was about 16 degrees and I was sans gloves so I immediately called Ralston and my brother-in-law, Pat, was there in no time to help me fix it. There is no need to call Triple A when a Loughran Brother-In-Law is within 20 miles.

Kerry and Madeline are six months old. Madeline is sleeping about six to seven hours a night. Kerry is going about four hours. They both flip over regularly on their backs all through the night. It's as if they're on some sort of invisible rotisserie. Kerry stopped her growling without the need of an exorcist (Thank goodness, they're terribly expensive and probably don't take major credit cards).

They both like to eat, and are in fact eating three meals a day. About fifty percent ends up in their stomach and the other fifty percent ends up all over Diane, the kitchen, and anything else within ten feet. Diane's entire day is spent on basic care and feeding. There isn't time for anything else. Their crying jags still go on for hours sometimes but it is beginning to ease up. Kerry likes to play the elevator game - I lie on my back and raise her up in the air. She giggles and gurgles. Madeline is busy crawling backwards (a metaphor of life I suppose) and gets her tush stuck under the sofa at various times throughout the day. Tonight we went out for Mexican food. They were wonderful until the food came, then they start in and we end up eating with one hand. Try to eat a burrito with a squirming 15 pound bag of protoplasm in your left arm and you'll understand our lifestyle (or what it's become).

I keep myself out of trouble by looking for work. I've had some good meetings with some local people in the planning biz and am slowly developing a little network. Nancy Donovan and I recently did a small consulting job for the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce which may lead to a bigger and hopefully more lucrative contract. I also took a sales job at Brookstone, a sort of upscale, hardware and houseware shop. It's part-time for the holidays. With the salary they're paying me it's more like volunteering. Though after ten years of getting agitated on a regular basis it's kind of nice to have a mindless position. The other good thing about it is I get to practice my speech. I feel great after a whole morning where no one looks at me funny and says, "Excuse me?" Though my fear is that all I'll be able to say in fluent Midwest English is, "Hello, welcome to Brookstone. May I help you purchase this forty dollar corkscrew that converts into a double sided vibrator? It only takes sixteen double A batteries and comes with a plug that attaches to the cigarette lighter in your car and has a life time warranty. Will that be cash or charge?"

I haven't had much time to develop my Yiddish Theatre though the first Latka Festival Omaha has ever seen will take place on December 16th.

Love,
Seth, Diane and drooly kisses from Madeline and Kerry

LETTER FROM THE FROZEN INTERIOR

January 2, 1991

Happy New Year! And belated wishes for the holidays (or consider this your first greeting for the 1991 holiday season).

We ushered in the New Year in at a small party here at the Loughran residence. Bruce, Nancy, Laura, Kevin, and other assorted friends and relatives showed up. Our tradition has been to cook some sort of wholesome meal, and sing the French national anthem at midnight. This year we made sesame noodles and Chinese pancakes. Speaking of pancakes we had a very successful Latka Festival two weeks ago. I introduced an entire culture to latkas and, subsequently, heartburn.

It is frozen here a good deal of the time. Remember how I joked about how obsessed these people are about the weather. Now I realize that when you have to spend an hour defrosting your car and driving in this mess how important it all is. The last two weeks have been pretty chilly. It sometimes gets above 20, but that's considered balmy. Anything above freezing is a veritable heat wave. I'm learning to cope.

Madeline and Kerry are cabin bound in this weather, but they've been keeping busy by learning to crawl. Madeline crawled for the first time on Christmas Eve. Now she takes great delight in scooting across the room and terrorizing her sister by crawling over to her and pulling whatever toy Kerry has in her hand. Sometimes she just likes to paw her. Kerry doesn't know what to make of it and spends a good deal of time quizzically looking at this strange twin creature.

The other big news is that they sleep through the night and are weaned. Well, they do get up from time to time but if they are in the crib by 10 we can almost be assured of sleep until at least 5 AM. This has made it easier on our sanity.

I finished up my part-time job last week. I could have made a career out of it but pushing combination naseel hair removers/cork poppers was only fun for a few weeks. Now that the new year is here it's time to get on with finding a real job.

We do plan a little trip to New York later this month. From January 16th to the 24th we will be back and staying part of the time at Edria and Michael's in Amityville (516 598 1183) and at Doree Epstein's in NYC. On Sunday, January 20th we'll be "at home and receiving visitors" at Doree's and you're welcome to come by from 3 PM on. The address is 351 W. 24th St. (bet 8 - 9 Aves.) Apt. 17 B (212 989 3739).

Things I am learning: Supermarket bags are called "sacks" and we drink "pop," not soda. Things I truly miss: the New York Times crossword puzzle (not that I ever finished it but I did pride myself on knowing at least one obscure fact per day), and cheap Greek coffeeshops (It's hard to waste time over the paper and a cup of coffee in the deli section of Hy-Vee Supermarket or the local Runza Hut.) Everybody around me seems so full of purpose and energy as opposed to the slothful and seedy types that held sway at the counter of the Hudson Diner.)

Love,

Seth, Diane and a pull of your hair with sticky fingers from Madeline & Kerry

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

February 27, 1991

In two days Madeline and Kerry will be nine months old. We can hardly believe it. It seems like yesterday when they both shared a crib and there was plenty of room to spare. In fact they used to look like two tiny loaves of bread on a football field. Today they each have their own crib. Madeline is standing up and almost trying to walk. Kerry has just begun to crawl though she is very satisfied to roll around the room. They both sleep from seven p.m. until about five or six when they take a bottle. Most days they go back to sleep until about seven or eight. We have had a few mornings where they stayed up and insisted on watching the 6:30 news with Charles Osgood (I can tell you a lot about early morning TV).

Aside from the two girls running us ragged, Diane and I are still trying to make a life for ourselves out here. While Diane's time is consumed with day-to-day care, I'm out there trying to figure out a way to make a living. I've been able to keep busy with some temporary things. I've done some legal research for out of state lawyers and I've written for the local business paper. Currently I'm working with a guy who is trying to set up career fairs in the Midwest. The pay isn't much yet but it may have some possibilities. In the meantime I joined a gym a few blocks from the house where I try to go each morning. Twenty minutes on the lifecycle is sort of like taking LSD, I space out and think of wierd ways to make money. Among my ideas have been a script writing service for businesses ("Not sure what to say, we'll figure it out for you"), an ethnic guide to Omaha ("Athenian Village on Center Street is the epicenter of Greek cusine in the Midwest), and a series of children's books about a set of twins that drive their parents into drugged-crazed zombies who drive around all night trying to get them to sleep while holding up all-night fast food restaurants along route 80 ("Zelda & Zoe slept fitfully as Mommy pulled the stocking over her face and stormed into Taco Bell").

We really enjoyed our trip last month to New York. As could be expected we brought along the crummiest weather of the season and spent most of the time indoors, though it was wonderful see everyone. The babies are becoming seasoned travellers. We hope to return sometime in the late spring or early summer. We also hope to have our own place by then and everybody will be invited here.

Adorable things about Nebraska: 1) Most of the commercials during the ten o'clock news are for cornfield insecticides and fertilizers. 2) I was at the bagel shop (the only bagel shop in town - one doesn't complain but is thankful) and forgot to stop at the cash machine beforehand so they were Pleased (captial P please note) to take my check for \$1.29. Somethings are spoiling us: like good brunch places for \$4.99; appetizer, main course, dessert and champagne cocktail inclusive. (Attention all you brunch crazed New Yorkers - See where \$4.99 will get you.)

Hope everybody had a happy Ground Hog's, Lincoln's Birthday, Valentine's Day, and Washington's Birthday.

Love & tugs on your shoelaces from Madeline & Kerry,

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

May 23, 1991

Next week marks one year of parenthood for us (not to mention Madeline and Kerry's first birthday). A very special day in our lives. While I sometimes don't feel very accomplished in the mysteries of being a father the girls seem no worse for my inexperience. They seem as happy and well adjusted as any pair of one year olds.

Random thoughts...

Sleep - They have begun to sleep for up to ten hours straight. As anyone who was around the first six months of their lives this comes as nothing less than a miracle. We give them a bottle (whole milk finally) and after a fuss of anywhere from five to twenty minutes then they are off to baby dreamland.

Feeding - we had visions of feeding them whole wheat breads, fresh vegetables, tofu surprise, etc. They have different ideas. The first few weeks of solid foods their idea of the four basic food groups were Cherrios, Cherrios, Cherrios, and Cherrios. That expanded one night when Kerry glanced at a take out Chinese egg roll in my hand, lunged after it and methodically gnawed her way through it. We still try to feed them healthy foods, though they did have a field day the evening we broke down and gave them a can of Chef Boy-Ar-Dee shark shaped pasta with meatballs (they ate the meatballs first, the little sharks were apparently too slimy with tomato sauce to get to their little mouths - they were covered head to toe with tomato sauce that night and needed to be hosed down---only kidding, we're not that negligent, we do use warm water).

Daily activity log - We take turns getting up with them to watch the six am news and "Good Morning America." They wake with lots more energy than we have at six a.m. They have the run of the house. Favorite activities include waking up anyone who is not up yet, playing with doors (one gets on one side and one on the other side and they keep shutting it on each other--loads of fun). They also love water therapy by playing in the toilet when we forget to close the door to the bathroom. Their favorite toy is whatever the other one has in her hands that particular nanosecond. They have taken to picking up one object and carrying it around all day. Lately this has included golf balls, the transparent eggshell portion of a L'ggs panty hose holder and once a vial of Advil (Not to worry, the top was childproof). Woe to those who try to take these things out of her clutches.

A few weeks ago we drove up to Minneapolis where we visited Uncle Dave, Kate and friends. We were quite apprehensive about the six hour drive. Turned out fine. With the exception of one twenty minute episode outside of Ames, Iowa where Madeline screamed bloody murder and her face turned the color of a beet, it was ok. Robert Benchly was right about two classes of travel...first class and with children. With twins it seems more like steerage considering what we schelp around with these days. Needles) to say travel planning requires NASA-like precision.

With that in mind we're planning another trip. We'll be visiting b^e east for three weeks, from July 1-23. We're staying at Edria & Mi (516-598-1183) and Doree Epstein's (212-989-3739). No formal pl^a we hope to see you.

Love and milky grins from Madeline & Kerry.

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

4911 California Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68132
402-556-1718

January 29, 1992

Belated happy new year greetings. A month into 1992 and I've already forgotten all of my resolutions (eat right, exercise, write regularly, attempt to read Anna Karenina, etc.). Other than that the year is progressing fine.

We are finally settled into our new home. I'm finding the pressures of home ownership not as terrifying as I had once imagined. Not being the fixit type (the word "handyman" and "Seth" are at opposite ends of the spectrum), I find that whatever cannot be solved immediately by duct tape and/or a few nails, probably can wait a few months when either: A) Diane has fixed it or gotten someone else to do it, or B) it's been broken for so long that we obviously can live without it being repaired. In spite of my genetic inability to repair even the simplest item, I do get a kick out of it when I have been successful and show it off to all visitors, even if it looks like a project done in a sheltered workshop environment.

Madeline and Kerry have taken to the new house very well. They strut around like they own the place. Their first order of business was figuring out how to undo all the childproof locks on the kitchen cabinets (their installation only took seven hours---their undoing took a mere fifteen minutes). Needless to say they won and the cabinets contain all of our heirloom Tupperware and Rubbermaid collection. One of their favorite activities is crawling inside the cabinets and holding little Tupperware parties (I suppose they each take a turn at being hostess in order to receive the free gift). They are beginning to talk and they love to go "Rrr-roar" when they see pictures of lions, tigers and bears. At nineteen months they hate their stroller and instead like to be walked around the neighborhood. As we live in the cholesterol center of Omaha (three ice cream parlors in a five-block radius), we sometimes walk them over to one where after a meal of grilled cheese and fries (much of which ends up on the floor), they each polish off a scoop of vanilla or chocolate.

A few weeks ago I started working with a local telecommunications consultant who is attempting to provide economic development services to small towns around the country. It's still too early to tell if it'll work out though I am hopeful. The office is about fifteen minutes from here out in the country (fifteen minutes from anywhere in Omaha is country). After ten years of a one hour commute on the E train to Queens I can't help but marvel at the fact that I'm at my desk in no time at all with a picturesque view of rolling hills and horse farms in the distance.

We are looking forward to visitors. FROM NYC: Take the Henry Hudson Parkway to the GW Bridge to I-80. Follow it 1,200 miles, get off at Exit 421 (42nd St.), take it north to Dodge St., go west to 49th St., make a right to California St., then a left, and we're the white house in the middle of the block. The most difficult part is probably getting out of midtown, the rest is a breeze.

Love, & rrr-roars from Madeline & Kerry

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

4911 California Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68132
August 20, 1992

It's the third week in August and I've accepted the fact that I will probably not be fixing up the garden this summer. Back in April and May we had some ambitious plans about putting in some vegetables, a few flowering shrubs and figuring out a way to install a fountain in the lily pond (well, not quite a lily pond---more like a horse trough sunken into a flagstone patio with lots of weeds around it). My visions of transforming the garden into a combination Monticello/Villa D'Este will have to wait until '93. In the meantime most of the weeds are green and a guy named Bob shows up every ten days to mow them.

Madeline and Kerry are enjoying the summer. Diane and I enrolled in a "Parent/Infant" swim program where they learned to splash water in a structured environment. We take them to the pool on Sunday afternoons where they get to practice their technique. Their favorite part is the trip to Burger King afterwards where they get to dissect a Kiddie Meal leaving most of the hamburger on the floor while smearing french fries and ketchup over their faces. Then, if we're really feeling like playing the role of parents, we let them spend twenty minutes in the fenced-in Burger King playground.

A few weeks ago they had their first pony rides. Diane needed to do some research at one of the libraries in Lincoln so we all drove down and dropped her off. Left alone with two screaming ban-shees, I was tempted to find the nearest shopping mall but lo and behold a sign proclaiming the Folsom Children's Zoo directed me to two hours of juvenile bliss. We did the ponies, the train ride (three times), had ice cream and lots of sugar-laden beverages.

The girls have certainly adjusted to the midwest way of life (though Kerry does enjoy the subway; on our last sojourn back east she took a seat on the IRT and put a "don't mess with me look" on her face as if she commuted on the Seventh Avenue line every day).

For better or worse I'll never be a fully well adjusted midwesterner. I try very hard to like it but after almost two years here I can say with some authority that Omaha is one the duller burgs in the country. But it could be worse. As we like to say here in Omaha, Nebraska...it's better than Scott's Bluff or Grand Island Nebraska. In order to help me keep a perspective on things I've begun writing a column in a local monthly paper (Omaha's answer to the Village Voice...only a lot less risque and none of the bizarre personal ads that make the Voice worth purchasing) entitled, "A New Yorker's Nebraska." Its earned me some minor (very minor) recognition.

Hope your summer has been a good one. Come visit...we love company, especially they when bring news and goodies from the outside world.

Love and splashes from Kerry &
Madeline,

Letter From The Interior

I recently returned from a 1,000 mile sojourn of the upper midwest. In three days I saw South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa. I had business in Madison, South Dakota -- home of the Karl Mundt Library & Museum at Dakota State University. The Museum is a delightful place to kill a good three minutes after dining at either Rumbles (a biker bar/steak house) or the Country Cafe (the kind of place where everybody shuts up and looks up when someone different (i.e. me) walks in. I appreciate Omaha a lot more after spending time in places like Madison. It sort of makes this burg look like Paris...in the twenties.

Yesterday I devoted to yard work. I weeded the lower forty (feet that is) of our flagstone patio. After spending three backbreaking hours it was pointed out to me that through the miracle of modern herbicides I can actually buy some lethal product that will zap away weeds sprouting through cracks.

Diane planted "mixed green salad seeds" (and basil for her highly praised pesto products) and I'm tending to my tea roses. I plan to get Madeline and Kerry some marigolds but their preferred flower is the humble dandelion. This is a good thing as we have more dandelions than any other house on the block.

Madeline and Kerry turned four on May 29th. They are entering the age of fashion consciousness. Kerry, heavily influenced by Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* prefers anything off-the-shoulder. She is also in training for her first Caribbean cruise or weekend in the Catskills as evidenced by her desire to change her outfits five or six times a day. She has breakfast wear, pre-preschool wear, preschool wear, afternoon wear, pre-dinner wear, dinner wear and usually pre-bedtime wear before slipping into Care Bear pajamas. Madeline is the opposite. She found a hand-me-down dress from her cousin Clare. The very worn out orange striped dress with an applique of a clock (hence its name as the "Clock Dress") is the only item of clothing as far as she's concerned. It's suitable for breakfast, loungewear, school, playtime, formal dinners, gardening, luncheons and parties. Attempts to take it off and wash it lead to a battle royal, though as it gets warmer she has agreed to wear her "Little Baseball Girl" outfit (a top and shorts with a picture of a little baseball girl).

The two of them finished up their second year of preschool and are now in summer camp. Since Diane started work with the State of Nebraska doing gerontology research on a part-time basis, our schedule has changed. I take off early on Fridays and ostensibly "work" at home. I'd appreciate any suggestions on how to handle a serious business call with two three-year-olds screaming for Cherrios in the background.

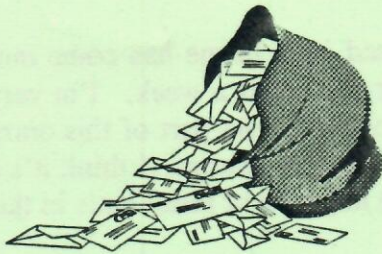
Diane is now out of town for a conference. I'm bachelor father for two weeks and then we'll reunite in New York in the middle of the month. When we're in town we want to take Madeline and Kerry to see the sights. At four they'll be old enough for some attractions as opposed to just the playgrounds of the West Side.

One thing we'll definitely be doing is picnics. Nothing excites them more than a picnic. At a moments notice they take their blankies off their beds, load it down with movable objects and call it a "picnic." Their favorite spot is the upstairs hall. At any given time we stumble across dolls, blocks, books, pillows, the contents of my dresser, computer files and a ton of other stuff on the floor.

Love,

Seth, Diane, Madeline & Kerry

See you Saturday!



We're busy here in the winter wonderland of Omaha gearing up for our third holiday season on the great plains. We've had two snowfalls so far. They're rather pretty but a pain in the neck to schlep around in, especially with two two-year-olds who are screaming in the back seat for "juice," "cherrios," "books" or something we can't provide as we're skidding down Dodge Street.

Madeline and Kerry are talking a mile a minute; sometimes in English and sometimes in twinspeak. They're both enrolled in preschool where they learned to sing "Old MacDonald" and "Three Blind Mice." We've been woken up at 6:30 to duets of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." There are actually some moments of the day when they play with their toys. Most of the time though is spent terrorizing their parents, exploring the cabinets under the bathroom sink, or sticking assorted odds and ends into the VCR.

After fully recognizing that Omaha is a pretty dull little burg, I've plunged into the community scene to keep myself busy. I had this crazy idea to bring foreign and offbeat films to town so I've ended up on the cultural arts committee at the Jewish Community Center. Not exactly a bastion of avant garde thinking, but it's a start. Don't hold your breath waiting for a Fellini Film Festival (unless of course a rare Yiddish version of "8 1/2" is unearthed somewhere). I have gotten my share of fun out of membership at the JCC. I hear the most wonderful conversations in the locker room:

1st Seventysomething Man: "Sol, how was the meeting of the cemetery society this morning?"

2nd Seventysomething Man: "That Morty, he complained again that the birds keep shitting on his wife's tombstone."

1st Seventysomething Man: "Oy, that wife of his. She was a pain in life and now she's a pain in death."

Then they proceed to argue over who had the best cardiologist.

You can't make up this kind of stuff.

I was also invited to sit on the board of a local theater group that performs in a coffee shop. The slogan for Circle Diner Theatre is "Drama, Comedy, Meatloaf." Adorable, eh? I haven't been writing much in the way of plays, but I'm plugging along on some fiction and

continuing to tick off loyal readers of the Omaha World-Herald with my column in Omaha's monthly alternative paper, the Sound.

My other new found activity is running. At 36, the repressed jock in me has come out. With some encouragement I'm trying to do a few miles three or four days a week. I'm very slow, but those endorphines really kick in and I find myself enjoying it. As part of this craze (early middle age weirdness I suppose), I had a catharsis and am now vegetarian (I think it's a reaction against the midwest steak and steer art that appears in the majority of restaurants in this town), though this could just be some sort of passing phase.

In between fathering, running, writing, eating grains, and trying to bring movies with subtitles to Omaha I do work for a living. My consulting gig became full-time last fall and now I'm a "Teleconomic Development Specialist." I travel to such fun places as Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Clearwater, Kansas; and Dakota Dunes, South Dakota and interview all the mucky-mucks in town about telecommunications and the local economy and then come back to Omaha, write up a report and hope they'll listen to my sage (and self-serving) advice and purchase our services to market their town as a place to attract telecommunications-based businesses. In some ways it's similar to the work I did in New York. The difference is instead of being abused by community groups bitching about Ed Koch, I'm treated with incredible kindness and respect (by folks who assume I know what I'm talking about --- or due to my accent are too polite to ask any questions).

Diane is keeping very busy being Madeline and Kerry's mom and working on her research. Nebraska Educational TV accepted her proposal and is now trying to get funding to produce it. Contributions are encouraged.

Our tenant, Kris from Kansas City, graduates nursing school this month. We're sad to see her leave but we've rented the space out to another nursing student, Debbie from Denver, who has agreed to babysit so we're in luck. We still have plenty of room and seek any and all visitors who are passing through. In the last year we've pleasantly surprised all our out-of-town guests (from New York, LA, Hawaii) who originally thought we lived in a trailer park and that the streets were unpaved.

I forced Madeline and Kerry to watch the Thanksgiving Day Parade on TV. I'm doing my part to remind them of their roots. They answer, "Omaha" when asked where they live but I'm trying to get them to answer "Greenwich Village" when asked where they were born.

Hope all is well and best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday and 1993.



Love,

Seth & Diane and an oink,
oink here and an oink, oink
there from Kerry & Madeline

Letter From The Interior

May 28, 1993

After much planning Diane planted a garden; tomatoes, basil and dill. Not much, but with a little olive oil and mozzarella we'll be able to serve appetizers through the summer. Madeline and Kerry also planted marigold seeds that they water every day. We also bought them two goldfish, Mutt and Jeff, who make their home on the bathroom counter, and after one week they are still alive.

After a particularly crummy winter (snow cover from November until mid-March) we're enjoying the spring. Last weekend we participated in a neighborhood yard sale. Over one hundred families in the Dundee section of Omaha, Nebraska traded their useless tschotkas with one another. For me the event just reinforced the truth that there is always a buyer out there.

I've been traveling about once a month. Early in May I was in Camden, Maine. After traveling to hellholes like Plumbreath, Kansas and Dogwater, Mississippi it was refreshing to go somewhere beautiful and stay in a hotel that overlooking the Atlantic (as opposed to places like Guymon, Oklahoma which may not really be the end of the world, but I swear you can almost see it past the feed lots at 6th and Main).

Madeline and Kerry will be 3 on May 29th --- contributions to their college trust fund and/or Princess phone accounts are welcome. We'll be celebrating with a party at the Loughran Lake House. We'll all partake in party games, eat junk food and blow out candles on a sheet cake decorated in a Little Mermaid motif. At the wise old age of three they are talking all the time, love to wear dresses (they call themselves "ladies" when they wear anything frilly) and have absolutely no interest in toilet training (though they love to watch *Bobby's Birthday*, a potty training video with the hit song, *I'm a Super Duper Pooper*). They finished up preschool last week and next year they enter the 3-year-old group (pending their ability to learn that a toilet is for something other than throwing coins, toys, credit cards, etc. in).

I've continued my running and actually finished a half marathon in Lincoln. It was pretty exciting considering the fact that the last race I ran was in third grade. What was amazing to me was that I wasn't the last one to finish (though I was pretty close).

We look forward to any and all visitors. Last Sunday the *New York Times* travel section did a feature about Omaha. They omitted certain things like the best Cheerio breakfast is served at our house at six each morning, the most comprehensive collection of children's videos in the midwest is stacked around our tv, and depending on our basil crop, we may have the finest pesto available between New York and San Francisco.

We plan a visit back east at the end of June. We'll be in the city for a few nights from June 20 - 25.

Love,
Seth, Diane & happy spring watering from
Madeline & Kerry

Thanks for a great weekend
much love,
L.A.

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

December, 1993

As we approach the end of 1993 we find ourselves healthy (for the most part), definitely not wealthy, and wise...well I guess that depends on how one defines the word. Diane and I can recite every line from *Aladdin*, *Peter Pan* and *Beauty and the Beast*, and Madeline and Kerry are 100% potty trained.

This month marked our third year on the prairie. Our roots are growing somewhat deeper; we've paid off one year of our mortgage. In twenty-nine years we'll actually own this place. We do like this house. One of the major drawbacks though is that it's 1,200 miles from Balducci's on Sixth Avenue.

Madeline and Kerry are budding musicians. We enrolled them in Suzuki music lessons. Madeline plays the violin and Kerry plays the piano. While not exactly prodigies, they do seem to enjoy it. Last month they had their first recital. Kerry got up and took a bow (that was the extent of her first performance), and Madeline played the "E" string. It was a very exciting weekend. We took them out to the Olive Garden to celebrate. It was one of our first forays into a "fancy" restaurant (not that the Olive Garden could ever be mistaken for Cafe des Artistes, but hey, to a three year old it was probably tres elegant).

Other firsts this year included my entering and actually finishing the New York Marathon. It was something I had always wanted to do, and with the help and encouragement of a lot of people, I did it. It was a great experience. It took me 6 hours, but coming through that finish line was an incredible feeling.

In September Diane had the distinction of organizing a poetry reading that was filmed for a group in New York that is producing a documentary on poetry in America. For a few weeks every poet in Omaha thought she had the power to make them a star. The reading itself was unique. A lot of people were dressed in black trying to imagine themselves as beat poets of the 50's. She ended up with almost five hours of video tape. While some of the poets were excellent, the producers will be glad to use the fast forward.

We enter 1994 wishing you the best.

Love from Seth & Diane and a few off key squeaks from
Madeline & Kerry

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

September 15, 1993

Dear Folks,

Unlike a great portion of the midwest, Omaha did not wash away in the great floods of '93. Though it was a rainy summer here, no one took to building arks or carrying scuba gear in their trunks. The only flood-related story I have concerns my fixation on obtaining the *New York Times*. I went to our local drug store, Baums (corner of 50th and Underwood---site of the only Japanese incendiary bomb balloon explosion in an American city during World War II; there's a bronze plaque attesting to this on the exterior wall of the store), to buy the *Sunday Times* (\$3.50, and the *Style*, *Real Estate* and *Sports* sections aren't even included). I was told that it didn't arrive because the train tracks flooded and "nothing's crossing the Mississippi." I found it hard to believe that my *Sunday New York Times* was sent via rail all these years but it did give me a nice old-fashioned sort of feeling and I walked home empty-handed.

This summer I chaired the first International Jewish Film Festival. The sponsors of Cannes and Telluride Festivals needn't worry about competition. We had four excellent films; *Man Without A World*, *Europa Europa*, *The Quarrel* and *Cup Final*. I finagled Eleanor Antin, director of *Man Without A World*, to speak the first night. It was wonderful to see this avant garde, red diaper baby director discuss her views of Jewish life and art at the Omaha Jewish Community Center (a real hotbed of middle class values). We didn't have a great crowd, but the end result is that I'm now on the cultural arts committee and will probably end up chairing the film festival for the rest of my life here.

We took a trip to Minneapolis where Diane's brother Dave was married. Diane and I hosted a reception for Dave and Kate in Omaha over Labor Day weekend. We had almost 100 of their nearest and dearest over for cocktails. A party of that caliber necessitated a great deal of preparation. It galvanized us into wallpapering the bathroom, new curtains, pruning the shrubs, etc. For a few moments before guests arrived it looked like something out of *House Beautiful*.

As September starts Madeline and Kerry enter pre-school as fully toilet-trained young ladies. It actually happened! My day is not complete without Diane putting them on the phone when I'm at work and them joyfully exclaiming, "I went potty in the potty chair!" They especially love discovering new toilets to use, hence a visit downtown usually turns into an exploration of every john in every shop and restaurant.

This fall I get to travel to such exciting burgs as Lebanon, Virginia; Des Moines, Iowa; and Jackson, Tennessee. I also plan to be back east in November.

Love from Seth & Diane & a diaperless
Madeline & Kerry,

**March 25, 1994; Evrv Pesach
Omaha, Nebraska**

Hi Everyone!

Sorry we can't be there, but feel free to use Madeline's Haggadah. She made it in school. Today we had a model family seder at JCC. Since Diane was at work I took Marge. Kerry was a horseradish (She wore a crown that a drawing ---that she did--- of horseradish on a plate) and stood up when the director of the JCC called out for the bitter herbs. Truly a beautiful moment. She ate all the parsley and eggs. Madeline didn't eat much, she was making goo-goo eyes with her buddy Michael (son of Dr. & Mrs. Something or other. I was the only Dad there without a beeper (or graying sideburns and a pot belly for that matter).

Marge took the kids back to her house and I came into work. I'm leaving shortly to send this out and shop for tomorrow. Bruce and Nancy are coming over with the kids. The menu is Matzo Ball in a Vegetable Broth, Stuffed Cabbage (nuts, mushrooms & onions), Potato Kuglettes (NU? Something different---basically potatoes made in muffin tins), and a Matzo-Spinach Pie. For dessert we stocked up on macaroons, kichel and I even found chocolate covered matzos at Bag'n Save (that's were Phyllis Wasserman, bookkeeper at the preschool, who lets me write her post dated checks, major domo JCC gossip, and veritable clone of any those ladies Blossom plays cards with, shops.)

Sunday afternoon Madeline has her second recital at University of Nebraska. She's still "Pre-Twinkle" which means she does about four notes of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" I promise to take photos, though she can get very stubborn at times (I wonder where she inherited that MOM?) and may get ticked off if I stick a camera in her face. Monday Kerry plays a recital (three notes of Taka-Taka ---a Suzuki mantra---).

Tonight Diane and I will clean the house (a totally thankless job) and then I'll shop (I picked up all the Passover stuff last week (Phyllis did tell me to shop early... With only 7,000 Jews the Passover stocks dwindle quickly) but I need to get all the other veggies.

It looks like I'll be in the week of 4/18, though I won't know for sure until next Friday. We're waiting on a couple of things to fall into place (namely finding a client we can bill the trip too). April 15th is Grandparent Day at Preschool. Think about coming out. Marge and Jack may come but it would be nice to have some participation from the East Coast.

Enjoy and give us a call sometime between the Four Questions and the Elijah's visit.

Love,



*P.S. Photos for
Dad + Bless, Mom; etc*

LETTER FROM THE INTERIOR

August 3, 1995

We're still here --- despite heat waves, terrorists in the heartland and the 104th Congress. It's been a while since I've corresponded. We've been busy with the ups and downs of everyday life. Madeline and Kerry are now five; Diane and I are edging closer to forty than we care to think about; and our 70+ year-old house is in a state of genteel disrepair.

Last spring Madeline and Kerry graduated from preschool. At the ceremony they wore little caps and gowns. Their preschool teachers announced their vocational goals. Kerry wanted to be a mail lady and Madeline wanted to be a shoulder doctor. We don't get too worked up over this because Madeline has recently changed her mind and wants to be a cleaning leader; not that she has attempted to practice in her own room. Besides graduation they performed as mice in their dance recital. They were in the chorus line with eight other little girls who kept bumping into each other. It was the highlight of the evening. They've continued their dance skills by performing "shows" for us in the dining room. We sit on the sofa in the living room and watch as they joyfully interpret, through dance, whatever is on the tape deck; be it Irish jigs, the songs of Edith Piaf or a schmaltzy version of *Sunrise, Sunset* by Mickey Katz. In June they had two camp overnights. As you can imagine, the overnights were a much bigger event for Diane and me. Going to the movies and dinner on a weeknight seemed like the height of decadence. Speaking of movies, Diane took them to see *Pocahantas*. Even after five years on the prairie we still can't acknowledge the fact that one doesn't have to get to a movie forty-five minutes before curtain time. So, Diane leads Madeline and Kerry into an empty theater, sits them five seats apart (to save room for Aunt Laurie and Cousins Clare, Matthew and Ben who know better than to show up so far in advance). Madeline and Kerry start whimpering, "Isn't anyone else coming?" and "Why do we have to sit so far apart?"

Sibling rivalry is on the rise. Every other phrase out of their mouth is, "I never get (fill in the blank...to eat Lucky Charms for dinner... the Lion King spoon... to wear the Pocahantas swimsuit...) or else it's, "She always gets (fill in the blank...to ride in the front seat... to eat cupcakes for breakfast...to play with the Cowgirl Barbie). Compromise and negotiation are not their strong points yet, but we're working on it.

Business is on a tiny upswing. I published an article in the June edition of *Operations & Fulfillment* (not exactly the *New Yorker*) about the "art and science of locating your new warehouse facility." My original concept was to use a Hemingwayesque approach ("Survey the level fields flowing across the mesa; count the interstate traffic as it makes its way into the death mask of the industrial park; sip a Pernod and think of the women you have known"), but the editor, somebody named Judy with a clipped British accent, encouraged me to keep it fairly straight forward.

My other writing endeavor was a one-act play done at a local theater. I had given the play to the director about six months ago. He called me one Monday in June and said the theater was going to do it. I said great and asked when. He told me it would open in two days. Hence, I wasn't involved in the production. It can best be described as Way-Way Off-Off Broadway. Some

of our friends saw it and much to my surprise, even got the jokes (at least half of them).

Diane has been busy with her work on the board of the Dance Theater of Omaha. The DTO is cutting-edge modern dance right here on the plains. Their latest performance was in front of James Rosenquist murals at the the Joslyn Museum. Usually they perform out of a funky Soho-style (complete with a seemingly unending creaky staircase) loft space downtown. Every few weeks she churns out a new funding proposal. Anybody who wants to donate \$30,000 can get the entire studio named after them (\$15,000 will get the staircase named after you).

We've had a couple of great hail storms which put a few major dents into our aging roof. I've been getting bids that are the equivalent of two weeks in Paris at the Ritz (the good rooms in the front, overlooking the Place Vendome). So instead of a trip this summer, everyone is invited to come by this September, sip some kir royales on our lawn, and admire our new roof.

Hope your roof is not leaking and the rest of your summer is happy and healthy.

Love,



Seth, Diane, Kerry & Madeline

Letter From the Interior - Annual Report - 1995

The Home Front

Despite the creaky back porch (some would it say it's decaying, though I prefer to use the term "rusticating") and the high ratio of weeds to actual blades of grass, 4911 California Street still stands. Our lovely roof will give us at least 25 years of pleasure every time we look at it. Each burnt umber shingle represents a kir royale we *did not* sip on the terrace of Cafe Flore on the Left Bank. The upstairs bathroom fared well with a spiffy new tile floor that only took six months for Inertia Tile Installers, Inc. to complete.

Our Daily Bread

I continue to find obscure places for companies to expand their telemarketing, data processing, and information-based operations. I've been quoted in such high-minded journals such as *Call Center Monthly*; *Plants, Sites & Parks*, *WSJ* and that compendium of site selection jargon, *Expansion Digest*. I'm also exploring the idea of working on my own. Anybody have a call center they want relocated? I have some great sites in Amarillo, Texas; Saginaw, Michigan; Paducah Kentucky, and that all time center of commerce, McCook, Nebraska.

Diane's contract with the State of Nebraska was completed in September. The past few months have kept her occupied with trying to find money for the Dance Theater of Omaha, and the Women's Fund. A major accomplishment this past year has been finding the best yoga teacher she's ever had. Who would have thought that Omaha would be a hotbed of eastern thought.

Reading & Writing

Madeline and Kerry made the plunge and are matriculating at Dundee School, two blocks from our rustivating domicile. After much debate over public vs. private we opted for the public and so far we're happy. A pleasant surprise was that here in the heartland their classmates represent a little United Nations. Kerry sits with Peng-Peng and Madeline sits with Shecoya (but she has her eye on Gregory Phillips).

They're also enrolled in something called the River Cities Reconstructionist Educational Cooperative (a real sixties kind of term for Sunday school; it's the consortium of two off beat synagogues --- whether Omaha can actually support two off beat synagogues is another matter). Lots of popsicle stick art. After Sunday school we usually go for bagels. The first time I took them without their Mom we ordered bagels (one plain, one sesame) and I was asked to scrape off the excess cream cheese. Obviously I was not up to the task as I soon heard the shriek that terrorizes all Dads --- "That's not the way Mommy does it!!!" By the way, there are now eight bagel emporiums in town up from one in 1991. Fate?

Bells Were Ringing

With autumn this year came the weddings of two of Diane's brothers. We made it through nine bridal showers, two bachelor parties, two prenuptials, assorted brunches, photo opportunities and two grand receptions. Now Cathy (Pat's wife), and Theresa (Dan's wife) join Kevin, Kate and myself at Loughran in-law support group sessions.

Anetevka on the Missouri

In June I became chairperson of the Jewish Cultural Arts Council. We've been busy with classes, lectures and the 1996 Film festival which may include the nouveau documentary classics, *My Lunch With Abbie* (about Abbie Hoffman's 50th birthday lunch at Sarge's Deli on Third Avenue) and *Havana Negillah* (about the last chapter of Haddasah in Cuba). Next fall we commence Yiddish : A Ganza Megillah (Big Deal). We'll be bringing in speakers, theaters, and klezmer music.

Love and best wishes for a happy and healthy 1996,

Seth, Diane, Madeline & Kerry (Now on-line: Bornloc @ aol.com)