SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1942

Dearest Kitty,

I'm sitting here nice and cosy in the front office, peering out through a chink in the heavy curtains. It's dusky, but there's just enough light to write by. It's really strange watching people walk past. They all seem to be in such a hurry that they nearly trip over their own feet. Those on bicycles whiz by so fast I can't even tell who's on the bike. The people in this neighbourhood aren't particularly attractive to look at. The children especially are so dirty you wouldn't want to touch them with a ten-foot pole. Real slum kids with runny noses. I can hardly understand a word they say. Yesterday afternoon, when Margot and I were taking a bath, I said, "What if we took a fishing rod and reeled in each of those kids one by one as they walked by, stuck them in the tub, washed and mended their clothes and then. . ." "And then tomorrow they'd be just as dirty and tattered as they were before," Margot replied. But I'm babbling. There are also other things to look at cars, boats and the rain. I can hear the streetcar and the children and I'm enjoying myself. Our thoughts are subject to as little change as we are. They're like a merry-go-round, turning from the Jews to food, from food to politics. By the way, speaking of Jews, I saw two yesterday when I was peeking through; the curtains. I felt as though I were gazing at one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It gave me such a funny feeling, as if I'd denounced them to the authorities and was now spying on their misfortune. Across from us is a houseboat. The captain lives there with his wife and children. He has a small yapping dog. We know the little dog only by its bark and by its tail, which we can see whenever it runs around the deck. Oh, what a shame, it's just started raining and most of the people are hidden under their umbrellas. All I can see are raincoats, and now and again the back of a stocking-capped head. Actually, I don't even need to look.

By now I can recognise the women at a glance: gone to fat from eating potatoes, dressed in a red or green coat and worn-out shoes, a shopping bag dangling from their arms, with faces that are either grim or good-humoured, depending on the mood of their husbands. Yours, Anne