Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Last summer, after nearly 30 years of absence, I visited my own old country, the Netherlands. While there, I got acquainted with "Tyd en Taak" (Time and Task), a Weekly for "Gospel and Socialism". I have been receiving this ever since and in one of last numbers I found an article, written in mid-April, as a memorial, two years after the death of our beloved President. The writer is a Doctor of Economy, otherwise unknown to me.

Of course, it was written in Dutch and therefore I took the liberty to translate it. You nor I, Mrs. Roosevelt, may agree with every word of the article. But the whole speaks of so much adoration and love for Our President, that I thought you might like to read it.

If I presume too much, please, blame it on my so lively admiration and love for President Roosevelt, whose great leadership we miss every day more and more, as history develops.

My hope is, that you will accept this small labor of mine in this spirit.

Yours, respectfully,

[Signature]
Katherine

Mrs. Roosevelt,

I hope you won't mind my writing to you and probably this will never reach you. But if it does, I hope that you will at least take the time to read it.

The afternoon that they had the services for your husband, I was in school, and they let us here it. As it came over the loud speakers I wrote this down.

This is how I felt and I'm sure everybody else also. Please read and keep...
for the effort, which he
without end,
for the necessity, which
was to all men.

for his thoughts, which
go down as a mystery
Roosevelt, was our President
best in all history.

but that a lot of time has
by since then, but I
believed that you would
read it. Now I am
the chance that you

With thoughts of both
of you, always in my
mind—Thank You—

Catherine L. Sanborn

This poem as a reminder
of how all the people felt
at the death of your husband
President Roosevelt.

Our President

P-i s for peace, which he fought
to see,
R-i s for the right, for you and
me.
E- i s for the errors, which we
have made,
S- i s for the service, which he
had gave.
T- i s for Inifinite Paralysis,
which thought to stop,
D- i s for the danger, which he
feared not.
E - is for the effort, which he gave without end,
N - is for the neccessity, which he was to all men.
T - is for his thoughts, which shall go down as a mystery.
Roosevelt was our president the best in all history.

I know that a lot of time has gone by since then, but I never believed that you would ever read it. Now I am taking the chance that you will.

With thoughts of both of you always in my mind - Thank you -
Catherine L. Sanborn

This poem as a bit how all the world felt at the death of our president.

Our President

P - is for peace which to see,
R - is for the right, me.
E - is for the errors I have made,
S - is for the service which had given.
I - is for Infinitely which thought the
D - is for the danger feared not.
12 Broadway
Concord,
New Hampshire
Lavaltrie, P. Q.
March 10, 1947

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Please accept my heartiest thanks for a most gratifying answer. Your signature makes it doubly valuable and it will be forever treasured.

Mentioning in My Day the book (2 in 1) on cause, would do much toward encouraging a publisher to print it at his expense.

Although seated quite close to you at the Forum, it was impossible to reach your car before you were whisked away. (It seemed, somehow, that my entire country was leaving and my heart ached beyond words).

Every idea you expressed, had that exclusive "Rooseveltian" ring so discernible and, when you spoke of your beloved husband, that great Ambassador of Right, we could not help wondering, once more, why he could not have remained with us, that his plans for an enduring peace might materialize.

You, his worthy successor, are valiantly attempting to convince the universe of his faith in the possibility of ending this post-war battle for world-domination. May you accomplish what he did not live to do, namely, persuade mankind that true fraternity alone can save it from witnessing the survival of the UNFIT.

Very respectfully and gratefully yours,

[Signature]
I am sorry. I cannot do as you ask about your book because so many people have asked me the same thing. I have had to decide that unless I could not do it, it was worse not to do for anyone. I could not mention the idea in my column.

Agree that is is bad you can not go back to yourown country
I am corresponding with a Montreal lady who has the extraordinary idea of launching two books of mine, one in French, the other English, under separate covers but in Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, New York City. [publication.

To obtain this, I need "un appui moral," a cordial boost for the sale of my books 100% if it is from you. As a member-adhérente de La Société des Femmes de Lettres de France, and one of the many Americans who will greet you at the Montreal Forum, I hope to do so more eagerly than the writer of this letter who still considers you the First Lady of our country.

I am also convinced that when our beloved President passed, the very heart of the United States was stilled and that Divine Wisdom decrees that you revive it by means of the all-enveloping love of your own, that "fountain of charity" which is one of His gifts to us, your compatriots. And we give thanks.

I do not ask you to act as critic after my books are published but I do feel that you will not resist inadmissibly, Mrs. Roosevelt, to this renewed expression of my admiration and deep gratitude and that you will not think of me as being just one of those manic tractor-letter writers who think nothing of "losing other people's time."

Why? Because you were exceptionally kind to me once, when I lived in Washington and asked your opinion on the possibility of obtaining space in a local daily which would have been called: The French Corner.

Only an American-born (and even an American citizen) niece of the great Abraham Lincoln. My sister, called me to her side. My dream did not materialize. Duty to an elderly sister, called me to her side. Until her dying day, she felt with the same inexpressible joy, the touch of Abraham Lincoln's hand on her head. After the war broke out, I could not obtain sufficient American funds to return home (anywhere in the U.S.A. is HOME to me) and live there in peace. Therefore, I sought employment, even passing Civil Service exams. All I obtained was a position, now and then, as companion, secretary or practical nurse. In reality, what these women wanted, was a housekeeper, and I have not been granted that gift. So, two years ago, I again came here.

To avoid losing my mind or dying from a relentless sense of frustration coupled with unbearable pangs of homesickness, I turned to my pen, once more. And that is one of the reasons for creeping in on you today, that you may be kind to an exiled American whose misery at times approaches martyrdom.

As you know, "we speak humbly, thankfully, reverently." And do you not feel a bit that I cannot manage to go back to live and die in my sacred land? I know you do.

I beg your forgiveness for taking up your time and I do authorize Miss Thompson to destroy this letter if she thinks you are too busy to know about it.

Je vous baise la main, chère Madame, et vous prie de me croire, votre très reconnaissante compatriote.
I am corresponding with a Montreal publisher who has the extraordinary idea of launching two books of mine, (one in French, the other English) under separate covers but in the same jacket. A novelty which should attract wide attention if given the right publicity.

To obtain this, I need "un appui moral," a word to the press which would boost the sale of my books 100% if it came from you. As a membre-adhérent de La Société des Gens de Lettres de France, and former student of La Sorbonne, I could, were I more self-assured, claim a tiny place in the field of Letters, here. But, altho my first book, published in Paris, met with general approval, in Canada, and sold surprisingly well, times have changed. Today, unless an American in Canada possesses an outstanding personality, a widely recognized name, extensive social and professional prestige, he is almost persona non grata, at times, and always "une quantité négligeable." Just another foreigner usurping especially in literary circles, what "rightly" belongs to Canadians.

I do not ask you to act as critic after my books are published, but I do solicit, very humbly, a word of praise for the genial idea expressed by my publisher: two books, entirely different, enclosed in the same jacket... They who are not interested in reading French can buy the English one, separately, and vice-versa. Naturally, a short preface signed by you would assure success undreamed of. But, dare I beg you to favour me to that extent? Who am I to dare approach you?

Only an American-born (and ever an American citizen!) niece of the seven Sancomb brothers who fought in the Civil War and the daughter of a woman who, until her dying day, felt with the same inexpressible joy, the touch of Abraham Lincoln's hand on her head. (He had stopped off at Plattsburgh, N.Y., and was speaking to my grandfather when he noticed the fifteen-year-old girl beside him.) And I, who was privileged enough to see our own revered President, with you following him, and your son, James, on New Year's Day, 1865, in your church, can well understand my mother's undying happiness. No poet can describe such a "vision fugitive" mais toujours vivante! The Royal Family of Pennsylvania Avenue on one side of the glass-panelled door and insignificant me, on the other, unable to think of nothing but giving thanks...

Are you now convinced of my pride and gratitude when I say with Hal Borland: "I am an American... Four words which we speak humbly, thankfully, reverently."? And do you not feel a bit sad that I cannot manage to go back to live and die in my sacred land? I know you do.

I beg your forgiveness for taking up your time and I do authorize Miss Thompson to destroy this letter if she thinks you are too busy to know about it.

Et je vous baise la main, chère Madame, et vous prie de me croire, votre très reconnaissante compatissante exilée,

P.S. We met them in France.
Throughout the endless hours of this, our Gethsemane, we scan the skies for Wings from HOME.

What is our HOME? A land conceived in the spirit of Righteousness, where Independence and Freedom rule and Honor is a nation's fare; a land of lofty ideals attained, of dreams sublime realized; ever deserving legatee of God, heir to His worthiest gifts, predestined to climb to the heights of the fittest, there to shed upon the world, the light of Love and Trust.

A land where Brotherhood is not a vain word nor Solidarity, a myth. A land of open doors thru which men of all creeds, all races, all ranks, enter, smiling, head high. A land of inexhaustible Hospitality.

An enchanted land of Nobleness so high that we, who were born of its heart and fed at its breast and too long tread foreign soil, can do naught but slowly die.

Can this be Fate? A gloating Destiny?

And should we scan the horizon for liberating Wings which, at HOME, know brighter stars, more radiant rainbows, whiter clouds, in an azured baldachin proudly unfurling its eternal magnificence "o'er the Land of the Free and the HOME of the Brave"?

Can they deliver us, that once more, in common bliss, we may feel the warmth of thy maternal care, beloved Homeland, and the touch of our Flag which on our knees we shall kiss as though it were a sacred garment of the Nazarene?
O, Flag, consecrated by the breath of Immortality, we miss thy nearness as we recite our daily Magnificat: "Our souls magnify the Lord Who appointed us to guard the honor of our Flag as it guards our loyalty." Stars and Stripes! Old Glory! ALL Glory! We venerate thee, O inexpugnable vanguard of our patriotism, O thrice blessed banner of Right's Crusaders, and we long to bury our tear-stained faces in thy folds and there to read, once more, our names; the names of all true Americans are interwoven, blended with each red, white or blue thread of thy loveliness.

Shall we ever return to thee, O indestructible emblem of American Unity?

If we should not, let it be known that long after the last notes of our Requiem have faded into nothingness, there shall still be heard in our undying hearts, a Hymn as immortal as Spirit; an Oath, alive and pulsating in Death as in Life; an Orison as sincere as The Lord's Prayer: "I Pledge Allegiance To The Flag Of The United States, And To The Republic For Which It Stands, One Nation Indivisible, With Liberty And Justice For All."

If we should die in the service of our Flag, we shall have lived for it, and fought for it, in willing bondage to its grandeur, and in Glorious Victory, we shall stand at attention, more proudly than ever, and gratefully, hail the Dawn of Eternal Day....

1940

-Heva B.-Sancomb