

Dear Dieter

Thank you for your letter. I think receiving a letter from someone is a joyful thing, even if it's not a physical letter. I heard on the news a while back that DHL was privatized, and I am suspicious sending your letter to North Korea. :)

If it's ok with you, I'll continue sending letters by snail mail. There's no special reason; I just enjoy writing letters by hand. Until recently, I thought I was a digital guy, but I guess I'm more of an analog guy. It started because my handwriting got messy. So I started using pencils again, and I really like the texture and sound when writing on paper. Of course, writing by hand takes a lot of time and hurts my hand. But I find it has its own charm.

You can reply by email, don't worry about it. The email address I've used the longest is stonegaze@me.com. You can also send it to stonegaze@icloud.com. It's the same account anyway.

I don't know much about law, so I'm not entirely sure what exactly you do. But I imagine it's very important work. And it seems like it must be very difficult. As you know, almost nothing in this world is completely right or wrong, and whatever you

patients, it's okay. I don't feel self-loathing. I'm doing well.

You mentioned travel. Our country is like an island, so traveling by land is unimaginable. Korea is surrounded by sea on three sides, and to the north borderline, 500,000 soldiers guard it. It's not officially known, but we know that even now, scouts from both countries secretly cross the borderline.

Were you born in 1971? Then you must remember the fall of the Berlin Wall. I was born in 1979. (My birthday is June 20th, 1979.) I was in elementary school then, and I still remember seeing people on TV using tools to break down the wall. I didn't fully understand it then, but I found the scenes of people crying and embracing each other truly beautiful. Now I know this event started from a simple misreport and many difficulties followed, but it was still a truly wonderful thing.

It would probably be impossible in Korea. Most Koreans don't want war, and if North Korea's regime collapses, China would likely intervene under the pretext of security before unification could happen. It seems likely this situation will persist for decades to come.

Returning to the travel story, the only time I crossed a border by land was when I went from the Czech Republic to Poland years ago. There was a conference in Poland, so I traveled with my family through the Czech Republic, Poland, and France. At the time, I debated whether to go through Germany, and I regret not doing so. I never imagined I'd make a pen friend in Germany.

I recently started amateur radio again. It's commonly called HAM, a hobby where you use a radio to chat with people living in distant. I got my radio operator license years ago but quit because it wasn't fun. There wasn't much to talk about, and nowadays we have this amazing thing called "internet". So I left it untouched for years, but recently decided to start again.

No other reason really, just to show off. :) I'm currently a Class 3 radio operator and plan to take a Class 1 license exam. Yes, partly out of boredom, partly to show off.

A Class 1 license just looks cool. Learning something new is always enjoyable, and if I'm lucky, I might even make contact with someone on the other side of the globe.

So this time, I bought three textbooks for American HAMs from Amazon.com. I need to know the Korean regulations for radio waves, but for everything else, American

materials are simply better. I've already finished one book.
(I'm currently diligently memorizing Morse code.)

Honestly, I think what revived this hobby is just being bored lately. My stock investments have stabilized, so now, besides studying something new, there's nothing to do except watch the latest news and make small adjustments to my portfolio. At least when Donald Trump says something outlandish, it requires a few days of contemplation, but other than that, there aren't any major changes.

Also, my wife and daughter moved to her parents' house, so I have more time alone after work.

(It's not a serious story. I'll explain in my next letter.)

This letter got long while writing. I'm on duty today and have to work 32 hours straight, so I'll wrap it up here. Stay well always.

Sep. 24th. 2025

Sincerely yours

Kyungtaek 