

Dear Mom—

7/3/2017

I wish you so many things for your birthday — ease of mind and spirit, joys both fleeting and sustained, a feeling of health and strength, comfort, pride in past accomplishments and loosing yourself in the art and craft and life of the intellect in the present, contentment and the ability to relax (and sleep) and take guilty-free pleasure in whatever you choose to do, indulgences in which you can revel, a sense of being understood and appreciated and sometimes spoiled. Some of these things I can give you — at least in part or briefly, and I hope I do. But I also hope when these things aren't all realized that you don't feel cursed by their absence or opposite. I believe in no plan to the universe — the fates don't give us what we deserve. Often far from it, but also often more than our share. The secret, I think, is not to curse and fester in resentment about the former, and to enjoy + appreciate the latter. And to find humor somewhere in it all — something you can excell at.

I want you to know how wonderful I think you are, how blessed to have you as a parent, how formed by your intellect, artistry, love, caring, nurturing, inquisitive, humorous self. Know how much you have affected and improved my life and all those who are blessed to know you. You have much to be proud of. Feel it. Let go of the curses of the past! You suffered through them at the time — don't continue it in the present. Strive for some Devil-May-Careness. You've earned it. May this Birthday - 80! - be the start of truly golden years (as only you can envision + appreciate them).

And always feel my Love, Mark