

## Apologies once again

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Here are two pictures of my computer screen while it is showing an animated film of "Number the Stars" made by a schoolgirl named Shani in Woodside, California. The reason I have titled this post as an apology is because Shani sent me this film, and some books to be signed, MONTHS ago. She waited a while and then wrote politely to asked if I had received them...and I had to reply regretfully that I had not, that they had somehow been lost in the mail. Yesterday they arrived, forwarded from the publisher to whom she had sent them, along with a stack of other mail...some of it dating to August 2007.

I don't know really how to account for this, but here is my theory. Forwarding the mail is a boring job. It is given to some minor employee who is overworked and underpaid, and eventually that employee quits, leaving mountains of untended mail, maybe on a high shelf someplace, out of sight. Eventually someone says, "What's this dusty stuff?" and takes it down and deals with it. But in the meantime months have passed. Christmas gifts have gone unacknowledged. A young girl who spent hours making a film is led to believe that it disappeared in the mail. Once, even, an invitation to dinner with the foreign minister of Denmark went unanswered because it didn't reach me until long after the dinner had been held.

And I don't have a solution, except once again to apologize to all those disappointed kids who

never got a reply to letters they wrote to me last fall. Maybe if we all gather, en masse, with placards, and demonstrate? March on the palace? Send a petition? Whine in unison?

The Dalai Lama says to smile and think: *I wish you happiness.*

And I do. But I apologize as well. And I'd like to wring the neck of the person who thought that kids' letters were unimportant.

Tags: Untagged