

QUANTNESS  
PEACEABLE STREET  
GEORGETOWN, CONNECTICUT

March 8th, 1943

Dearest Laura:-

How splendid of you to be doing the work you are doing! I do admire you and I do envy you. So does Jo (Josiah is my husband, you know.) We both feel like the lilies of the field that toil not, but most ardently longing lilies. Jo has been very ill for six or seven years, too ill to be out of bed, most of the time. We both decided we would get work in some of the defense plants near here, although how we thought Jo could I don't know, as getting up and downstairs is a major problem -- but he has will power! But last spring he was in the hospital for a couple of months, with all the doctors telling me he couldn't live, and then this autumn off I went to the same hospital, because of a bad hemorrhage (if that's the way one spells the inconvenient thing) and the doctors told him the same thing about me. But here we both are! Only what work we do for the war has to be done at home. Jo does a lot for the Writers' War Board and I do typing and so on for various relief things, and the undertaker's wife and I are trying to get surgical dressings under way. So when we meet again -- when that lovely time comes! -- you'll probably find me speaking with a strong Swedish-laced-with-Polish accent, for that's what us Georgetown ladies mostly speak. They're nice, and very kind to me, even if I am the only one who hasn't a large V for Victory in rhinestones on her hand-bag. But, you, Laura! What you are doing!

I think of you often, and look often at your beautiful photographs. And there is music that always makes me think of you, and green velvet always makes me think of you -- that picture of Queen Victoria as a child that I bet you wish I would forget, by now! And I think of the stars, that night you drove me to the Garden of the Gods, and the sunset on the day when you took Mother and me far, far from cocktail parties and the Antlers -- no, I mean the <sup>B</sup>roadmoor Hotel, and saved my inside life, I can tell you! And I wonder if you ever dug up that jar of brandied peaches we couldn't find the night you had us to dinner, and let me pick sweet peas, and ~~saved~~ my inside life, pretty battered by then, again. And the day we went to Glen Eyrie --

"With fear I pushed the creaking, loosened door,  
As I had, happier, many times before.

Oh, tiny palace, midget house,  
perhaps baronial to the mouse  
that scampered off ... but not to me.  
Great rooms and stairs and endless halls,  
cupboards Pegasus used as stalls,  
to fade and shrink to such a size! --  
I tightly closed my giant eyes --  
to narrow through the slender years  
till now too small to hold my tears  
or hide the stain that memory bled.  
I slammed the rattling door and fled."

That's from one of Jo's verses (he beats me if I say poems) in a book of his called Galanty Show. It is the way Glen Eyrie made me feel that day.

And I've been thinking of you this week, gathering pussy-willows by our pond, and remembering how you used to star in school, singing "Little Pussy-willow, pretty little thing, Coming with the sunshine, of the early spring -- Tell me, tell me, Pussy -- " and so on and so on.

I do wish everything good for you, dear Laura.

Always lovingly,

*Gene*