

19 Sharp Hill,
Wilton, Conn.
Feb. 20th '52

Laurie Dear:

How long is it since I last wrote? Plenty long, I know that.

Now that you have recently moved, you are still busy getting settled, I bet, just as I am here. But probably you aren't living in a veritable jungle — untouched by human hands for over thirty years.

There's so much to be done outside, I just never get around to final chores inside the house.

Moreover, I have accepted a commission — to do a bust of Susan B. Anthony for N. Y. U.'s Hall of Fame. Luckily no visitors at present, for my housekeeping goes to pot as I wrestle with the problem of evolving a living portrait from a few old daguerotypes + bad early photos — not one of which depicts her at the age I want to represent her!

But enough of this — my letter must contain some very sad news for you: Our brilliant, lovable Edie has left us. She had badly overworked + worried over remodelling the house at 1136 Everett Avenue into apartments to rent. Early in January she had a bad heart attack + was put into an oxygen tent in the hospital. Dillon hurried down from Urbana, and he and Jim kept constant vigil. After a few weeks she did seem to be getting better, + was out of the tent except at night. She was eagerly anticipating Johnny Boy's return from Germany with his Margaret, and the baby boy Edie had never seen. However, while they were still on the ocean, she had another bad attack, and the doctors frankly said they could no longer hope for her recovery.

Johnny + family spent one night with Floss

We've had quite an open & wild winter so far - but are promised snow again tomorrow. Not having a car, I love the snow! Write me when you can, Dear, and tell me how things are going with you. Ever your Bessie

Nelson, & then rushed right on to Louisville. She had several glimpses of them from inside the tent, and, they tell me, beamed rapturously at the baby. But after two days, she relapsed again and died on February 9th.

It seems incredible that such wonderful vivacity and spirit, and high courage should have just vanished away. I've lost such a dear good friend, - & have been pretty blue. Still - if she had to go, her life had achieved its main goal - that of bringing up the boys, seeing each one find the niche that best suited talents and temperaments, and all three happily married, with a grandson and granddaughter for her to rejoice in. She couldn't have borne much longer the strain of teaching; and, though it brought on a fatal illness, did achieve and bequeath to them a house which can bring in rental revenues to help them financially. But O, what a vacancy she has left! She was, I think, the most vivid human being I've ever known. And her wit and humor were inimitable.

Floss came out to spend the day with me, shortly after we received the sad news. Poor Floss was quite broken up. She was devoted to Edith - and I think it did us both good to be together a bit.

Sorry this seems to be a spoiled page - I know you'll forgive me if I don't start all over again. I am tired just now, working until midnight most every evening on the big head - plus marketing, cooking, etc. Otherwise am fine, and loving this place more and more. Hope to have a real, if small, vegetable garden this year, and maybe even a few flowers & shrubs, not to speak of some young beech and tulip and dogwood trees that are to be moved out from the woods to my own acre, come early Spring.

B. Putnam
19 Sharp Hill
Wilton, Conn.



VIA AIR MAIL

Miss Laura Gilpin,
P.O. Box 1173,
Santa Fe,
New Mexico