

Gethsemani, Tuesday May 19, 1970

Dearest Nell,

This place, and this silence and solitude are so marvelous, all the wild roses are now in blossom - a great 10 foot high hedge row of them surrounding the several ~~acres~~ several acres of forest immediately around me, and all through these two thousand acres. The hermit life is so pure here - now I am surrounded by squirrels and rabbits and foxes (the foxes completely tamed and come right to the porch) and deer. I get up earlier and earlier - this morning at 2:15 to do my work in the long hours before dawn, because with the coming of day, things are so ravishing I slow the work down - feed all the animals, sit on the porch in their presence to do my reading, and take my meals out there. I get a great deal done, and with no fatigue at all.

Now, this is to tell you, in the form of a self-accusation, that I did not yet send the book to Arabel. For the simple reason that all the monks wanted to see it, each in turn. They are handling it with great care, and still passing it around. I hope you will forgive me, but I could not say no to such a request. I have talked with Arabel, and though Houghton has nothing to do with the editorial policy of Ballantine Books, they do have a lot of interchange and she said she would be very happy to see that the book got into the right hands. She is very excited about it. So, I will send it from here in a day or so, and beg your forgiveness for the delay.

How wonderful those days at Villa Serena....Please thank Bertha for all her kindness to me. We remember both of you in our Masses and prayers here.

Love to you,

John