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Madrid

20 September 1959

Our dear Nen,

If I were to name the happiest moments I have known, I could easily find them because they and memories of them are with you. I would trade the world, its castles and corners, for the peace and power of your valley. Its magic is ever radiant. How often - countless times - have we spoken together of you, thought together of our delicious evenings before the fire, of the sweet warmth of "Buen Retiro", of the grace and strength given us by your presence. Words are inadequate - but from the distance of these several months the meaning and depth of our friendship comes with great clarity. It is among our greatest treasures.

The photographs are with us at last, coming in the mail from Mother, who parted with them only recently, fearing a loss in the mail. What can we say except that we love them, that



They are beautiful? They do hold our secret  
and They whisper so softly to us of our  
joy. We shall send Them later on —  
reluctant to part with them .. and shall  
mark the ones we like best, as you suggested.  
But they all are part of the morning and  
it shall be hard to choose. Please think  
of our choices only as part of conversation,  
and take the last sentence yourself!

I think of you as September passes  
knowing that you are happily absorbed  
in the preparation of "Bare Feet".  
It was barely one year ago when we first  
drove into the Valley — and it is with a  
strong nostalgia that we recall the golden  
September afternoon shared. O so many  
golden memories you have given us!

I write tonight because we are  
settled at last after a long search for  
a place to live in Madrid. The first days  
in the city were especially tiring with  
so much to accomplish and the constant  
weight of a new language. Today is our  
first day of real sunlight and calm, after  
days when the world was too much with us.

We are living in a family but have



considerable space to ourselves. Our room opens on a small tiled terrace which gives us the warming morning sun. It takes some getting-used-to, this living in the Spanish way but we are happy not to be isolated from the customs we came to understand. Being in a family gives me a strong yearning for our own house, our own way, but we shall make one here as the year progresses, a small and modest corner. Meanwhile, in our thoughts we build our house.

With us, too, are the many-colored memories of our summer's journey, how full and varied they are! The islands especially - and Holy Island most of all. ... Nights spent in a crofter's cottage on the Isle of Skye, where we felt so far from the noise of everyday ... our first sight of the velvet highlands ... the tiny lanes and hamlets of the Cotswolds village ... A mass in Charles Cathedral where the stain-glass dappled the stone with its many-colored light ... over-hearing a discussion in the House of ~~Par~~ Commons ... walking along the Thames late at night under the watchful eye of Big Ben...



The sweetness of the French countryside ...  
sleeping out in a meadow to wake to a  
chorus of snails! ... The delicious French  
cuisine - especially our picnics which  
took us far into the quiet fields and  
groves.... And the sculpture in and on  
the Romanesque Churches - waiting so  
patiently for us to come and look and  
admire ... And then the drive through  
the Pyrennes, up and down, onto the hard  
earth that is Spain: An adventure,  
a summer of wandering. A pair of gypsies,  
we. But time will keep the memories  
making them last, while we make more  
to bring home to you.

How happy I am that the pictures  
arrived. At last they are home for  
they belonged to you long before they  
were mine.

We enclose rays of Spanish sun,  
strong and clear - and our own  
love in great measure.

Margaretta  
Smith