

This letter and many more have come to me here in this part of the world that is called New York, where everyone is being driven but knows not why nor where --- only that it is not the wind in the dark nor the snow beating against the window pane.

There must be literally millions more like me, who are held here for one reason or another, yet whose hearts go back and forth to the barn, morning and evening, and whose eyes watch down the road for the coming of the mailman. The hills of home are in the mind and the thrush sings on in secret --- there is no forgetting.

For us, such a letter comes as a symphony --- like Sibelius' Fifth or Beethoven's Pastoral, and for us the bells tremble and the leaves dance.

Contoocook, N. H.
October, 1946

How good it is to be home again! I have gone around all day in a dazed happiness --- making butter, baking bread, and bathing children to my heart's content. How beautiful it is out of doors --- the very smell of it! We all of us walked down to where Tom has been cutting trees. The children climbed over the fallen trunks and through the leaves, coming out with acorn treasures and ground pine and partridge berries. The

witch hazel is scenting the whole woods and the leaves lie deep and golden brown by the walls and hollows.

Tonight the fire is singing quietly to itself, stories of the beautiful forest, of the little wild feet of fairy people and the winds tales. The lamplight makes a warm glow between us on the red table cloth, which is answered by a hundred lights on the china dishes and the cookie jars and the brass candle sticks. The garden's last bouquet is on the table, a mass of color and sweet scents. There is a big yellow bowl of bright cheeked apples too, and the room smells of wood smoke and warmed Rosemary; for all day long Betheny and I have been bringing in the plants for the winter. The windows are full of geraniums, with the Rosemary in the place of honor in her big red pot that sits inside the Bullfight bowl. The crickets are quiet, they feel the first frost, ^{only} one on the hearth giving us a fall ballad, to the slow tick of the grandfather clock.

Last night there was a bright yellow moon --- the Harvest Moon --- how beautiful she is! Part of you was standing there in the beautiful field, quite untouchable, with moonlight and mist and fairy rings about your feet. Remember last year how the Christmas moon shown through the window on little Tom-Tom's cradle, and our dancing --- what fun it all was!

Betheny and I are turning our minds to Christmas cake-making already. We are collecting raisins, cherries and almonds, and one of these days we will fold back the red table

cloth from the long kitchen table and spread out all our goodly store and make pounds and pounds of Christmas cake. Tom-Tom will be under the table picking up crumbs, Bethany and Seth will be sticky up to their elbows and the delicious smell will be about the house.

December, 1946

A new month --- how exciting! Some morning soon now we will look towards the mountains and they will be dazzling white with snow.

We did have such a spooky Halloween --- the night was wild and windy with scudding clouds and racing leaves. Noises and spirits could be conjured up at the least sign. Winter Kitchen was lighted with seven moonshines. Chairs tipped, moonshine lids popped off, showers of mysterious pumpkin seeds fell from nowhere, and last but hardly least, there was a very large and extremely poisonous looking spider (made of cloth and wire) which descended from an empty doorway, to the proper horror of several small persons. "He was positively gashly." We had cider and cookies and homemade bread and new butter and afterwards played charades till nearly ten. The house smelled from top to bottom of roasting moonshines and Christmas cakes, which I elected to bake yesterday. They turned out perfectly --- nothing bewitched them fortunately. Bethany and Seth are cross

as hedgehogs today.

The puppet family grows bit by bit --- a piece of leg of an evening, an arm while waiting for the kettle to boil. Red Riding Hood is completely bewitching! Tom-Tom just stands in front of her and vibrates with sheer ecstasy --- it is too funny. Today Bethany helped me line plaster casts with papier mache for 'Granny' and the 'Wood Chopper' --- such fun! I have made a real stage with curtains that draw and real scenery too. Bethany and Seth spend hours working the puppets and have a kind of magic with them.

The drawings are having a slight rest as I have just mailed off the last batch. I am putting my garden to bed. Such a bloom of Canterbury bells and foxgloves we will have come spring - if they but stand the winter. I have nursed them carefully and covered them in a warm hay bed. Yesterday I planted the peony roots --- pure white and dark red ones --- none too soon - for winter is here tonight.

① The echo of a young laugh full in love with the shadow
of a tear and out of their marriage a child was born

② you find a new moon - pat