Dearest Nell,

It makes me feel a bit guilty accepting so generous a present & I certainly dare want you to feel we expect it each year. It is dear of you & we all greatly appreciate it. You would have been happy to see Edna's face light up when I handed her her share as she had just spent about her last penny on woolen cloth for a handsome braided rug she is making for her HopeChest. I'm so proud of her joy in crafts. She loves to weave and sew & knit & does all to perfection, as well as being the Bread Queen of the entire family. Her bread surpasses all others.

I mailed Wendy to You - Texas where he is stationed at Fort Bliss, so it may be a while before you hear from him.

Bethany's is holding until she returns - February or March for her trip with Mr. Dennis the ornithologist. They're somewhere off - Mexico or Central America.

Seth's birds are tonight, so I imagine they will write soon.

Seth just called to ask me questions about a work bench he's building me. He was jubilant over a fine old turning lathe he had just purchased. One of the really finely made heavy ones. "A beautiful piece of machinery" he says. You should see how he treasures his tools & what fine ones he has. He spends all his extra on them & has bought them from England and Switzerland & so on. I wish you could see how well he works with them. I'm so proud of him.

I'm having the best time working on a Nativity Marionette show for next Christmas. It's going to be my masterpiece. Seth fixed up the old doll house room so I can have the stage up permanently to work on, which makes a world of difference. I'm building a new stage with two bridges & a longer acting space which allows for more magic seeming effects. Lisa is collecting wonderful music for it from Marlboro College Music Library & Barbara Von Trapp is going to sing the carols & Glen play her dulcimer. Such fun!!!!!

I'm on a very strict schedule of drawing right now, & will be until May I guess. But I don't mind I have fun at night with all the other projects and am delighted to see the piles of drawings mounting up.

I've decided to spend my share of the Christmas bounty

I'm also a new washing curtain for my stage, & also a baby spot light. I can't decide as yet. I'm truly don't know what it means to all of us.

I've two tame Snow Buntings who have been here almost two weeks now. I can approach to within three feet of them & toss them corn. The house is surrounded with bird feeders of very odd shapes & styles & one continually hears tapping & knocking & beaks & bills.

I've three tame mice too, two of them live - a dun & white, & a feed name lives - an abandoned gold fish bowl. The gold fish live - three huge meal worms when I - not writing said worms. When I am the fish & four weeks - the bath tub.

We had the gold pins nearly five years now & they are quite large.

Thanks again for your sweet letter & the gift, both meant a great deal.

Much, much love!

as always

L.