March 6, 1969

My very dear Nell:

Your letter of more than a few days ago has lain unanswered and like a heavy lump on my heart, at a time when things have been a little rough in other quarters, too. Life is never serene, but I've discovered it can blow up quite a storm from time to time.

Such observations are scarcely an answer to your problems, either. Honestly, I wish I had one that would. The real answer lies not in the realm of human relations, but in the world of publishing and in the way books are handled in the trade. The crucial elements are the salesmen, the bookstore, the customer, the reviews. With the kind of books we publish the least important of all is advertising. Whether you believe me or not, I must tell you that even if we had done a great deal more in space advertising than we did, the Christmas sales of your book would have scarcely changed.

As it is, the first half-year's sales were creditably good. They amount to 929 copies as you will see from your Royalty Statement, which I am enclosing. Last June's statement was so small that I just didn't send it. The book had only just come out and it was much too early for any kind of movement.

I know you were puzzled and disappointed to hear that your friends couldn't find copies in the stores to buy at Christmastime. Our salesmen tried, I know, because I had told them OF NIGHT AND DAY would be a good gift book. But if a store didn't order, there was nothing we could do.

I will get out a line to the men though, asking them to make a special effort to get the stores to re-stock now. Spring is another buying season, and maybe we can get some increased sales that way, otherwise, we will continue to promote your book as we do all the others on the backlist. Please don't dispair.

My very best,

B.

Burton Cumming

Mrs. Nell Dorr
Nettleton Hollow Road
Washington, Connecticut 06793

Enclosure: Check #08376