



1874-09-27

Letter from [John Muir] to [Jeanne C.] Carr, 1874 Sep 27.

John Muir

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(Consider the grasshoppers how they grow & go)



Yosemite Valley
Sunday Sep 27th 1874

Dear Mr. Carr,

I have been down bathing in the Langes. I wonder if I will ever know another river like this. After splashing & playing in the sparkling crystal I swam across to examine a section of the bank & found charred bark ten feet below lake & flood deposits. In a vertical portion of the bank I discovered two small frogs of a new species each snugly nestled in a sandy niche from whence they could look out over the water. They are not water frogs however. I swam over with them in my hand holding them aloft & when I ducked them they made a great nervous ado. I have them in my room hoping they may sing like crickets or tree frogs for me in the night.

In walking over the pebbles I received some tingling lessons on drift formations upon the soles of my feet. The wind sifted deliciously through my rising flesh, & thrilled every fiber. The afternoon sun shimmered upon the glossy poplars bright as upon the rippled currents of the river. A thickets of tall waving golden rods warmed the sand bank & the whole valley is full of light like a lake in which one instinctively loses the windows as if it were water.

I chased a grasshopper & finally wearied the lucky fellow & made him attempt to fly over the river into which he fell & I ran out & captured him before any of the trout.

Another larger one flew up which I also succeeded in driving into the river but just as I got within arms length a trout caught him by the legs & drew him down.

I clipped the wings of the first & carried him to my room to experiment upon his habits & movements. Here is an exact copy of his walking ^{natural size} embroidered track with which I got by compelling him to walk across a plateful of fine sand in my room.

I showed the original track to an Indian, but he only grinned & did not see. Black's Chinaman was also puzzled, & thought it might be writing. Billy Simms happened along & inquired for Killore & Keith. I showed him the track & he guessed it might be that of a tarantula or centipede.

No 1 in the fig is made by the middle feet. No 2 by the front feet & No 3 by the feet of the leg jumping pair. Fig 4 is made by his body & is more or less continuous according to his weariness or the depth his feet sink in the sand.

The three figures at the head are copies of the tracks he makes in jumping. The first are made by the front pair, 2 the second & the third & 4 by the body in crawling.

It is beautiful is it not & the track embroidery of the gray lizard is still more beautiful.

The above grasshopper in the grass is supposed to have walked over with all its legs & along the bottom, & jumped three on the top of the page.