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1877-04-23

**Letter from John Muir to Sarah [Muir Galloway], 1877 Apr 23.**

John Muir

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San Francisco  
April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1877

My dear Sister Sarah.  
To thee I give & bequeath  
this old gray quill with  
which I have written every  
word of my first book,  
knowing as I do your  
predilection for curiosities.  
I can hardly remember  
its origin, but I think  
it is one that I picked up  
on the mountains, fallen from  
the wing of a gray eagle;  
but possibly it may be  
only a pinion feather of  
some tame old gray goose,  
& my love of truth compels  
me to make this unpoetical  
statement. The book that  
has flowered from its whittled  
rib is however as wild as  
any that has ever appeared  
in these tame civilized days.

Perhaps I should have waited until the book was in print, for it is not absolutely certain that it will be accepted by the publishing houses. It has first to be submitted to the tasting critics, but as everything in the way of Magazine & newspaper articles that the old pen has ever traced has been accepted & paid for I reasonably hope I shall have no difficulties in obtaining a publisher. The manuscript has just been sent to New York & will be reported on in a few weeks.

I leave for the mountains of Utah ~~in~~ today. The frayed upper end of the pen was produced by nervous gnawing when some interruption in my logic or rhetoric occurred from stupidity or weariness. I gnawed the upper end to send the thoughts below & out at the other

[ 3 ]

Love to all your happy family & to the Stems. The circumstances of my life since I last had your farewell have wrought many changes in me, but my love for you all has only grown greater from year to year & whatever I do I shall ever be yours affectionately John Brown.