



1881-05-16

Letter from John Muir to Louie [Strentzel Muir], [1881] May 16.

John Muir

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rising in value with the latitude
 The wine is delicious
 I'm glad you thought to send
 my glasses & barometer &
 coat, we will procure furs
 & as we proceed north so as
 to be ready in case we should
 be compelled to winter in the
 Arctic regions. It is remarkably
 cold even here, & dark & blue
 & forbidding every way though
 it is fine weather for health.
 I was just thinking this morning
 of our warm sunny home, of Annie
 in her soft blankets with her blunt
 nose & double chin, & of the red
 cherries down the hill, & the 100's
 of blunt-billed finches everyone
 of them with red bills soaked in
 cherry juice, not much fruit juice
 beneath this sky. Ever your affectionately
 husband John Miller

From now
 San Francisco
 Corn, compass
 care Alaska
 Bonalaska
 Corwin
 Abbey Steam
 from receive letters by passing mailers.

1881
 00999
 15 16 May
 Monday 10 A.M.
 2 Miles from shore.

How cold it is
 this morning, how it blows &
 snows. It is not "the wolf's long
 howl on Bonalaska's shore"
 as Campbell has it, but the
 winds long howl. A more sus-
 tained, prolonged & screeching
 rising howl I never before
 heard. but the little Corwin
 rides on through it in calm
 strength rising & falling amid
 the foam-streaked waves like
 a loon. The Cabin boy Henry
 told me this morning early that
 land was in sight. So I got
 up at 6 o'clock (9 of your time) &
 went up into the pilot house to
 see it. 2 jagged black masses
 were visible, with hints of high

⁽²³⁾
snow mountains back of them
but mostly hidden beneath a
snow storm.

After breakfast we were within
2 miles of the shore. huge snow
peaks grandly ice-sculptured
loomed far into the stormy
sky for a few moments in
tolerably clear relief, then the
onrush of snow flakes sweeping
out into the dark leads of the
sea would hide it all, & fill
our eyes while we puckered
our brows & tried to gaze
into the face of it all. We have
to proceed in the dimness &
confusion of the storm with
great caution stopping frequently
to take soundings, so it will

⁽²³⁾
probably be 1 O'clock or 2 P.M.
before we reach the harbor
of Oonalaska on the other side
of the island. I tried an hour
ago to make a sketch of the
mntns along the shore for
you, to be sent with this letter
but my fingers got too cold
to hold the pencil, & the snow
filled my eyes, & so dimmed
the outlines of the rocks that
I could not trace them.
down here in the cabin
it is warm & summerish
& when the Captain & the
doctor are on deck I have
it all to myself.
The oranges & the almonds &
the wine that that the doctor
so kindly sent are rapidly