



1881-05-22

Letter from [John Muir] to [Louie Strentzel Muir], 1881 May 22.

John Muir

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To Mrs. Muir

Sunday afternoon, May 22, 1881.

Dear Louie;

^u
We left ~~Genalaska~~ Alaska this morning at four o'clock and are now in Bering's Sea on our way to St. George and St. Paul Islands. We expect to reach St. Paul tomorrow and remain there half a day or so, when I will send this and another letter that I have for you by the Alaska Com. Co.'s steamer back to ~~Genalaska~~ Alaska to be forwarded by the first chance. This morning I sent you five by the schooner H. L. Tiernan, which is going to Oregon where they will be put in the mail. Next Tuesday or Wednesday we expect to come in sight of the ice, but hope to find open water, along the west shore, that will enable us to get through the Strait to Cape Serdze or thereabouts. In a month or so we expect to be at St. Michaels, where we will have a chance to send more letters and still later by whalers. You will, therefore, have no very long period of darkness, though on my side I fear I shall have to wait a long time for a single word, and it is only by trusting in you to be cheerful and busy for the sake of your health and for the sake of our little love and all of us that I can have any peace and rest throughout this trip, however long or short. Now you must be sure to sleep early to make up for waking during the night, and occupy all the day with light work and cheerful thoughts, and never brood and dream of trouble, and I will come back with the knowledge that I need a fresh supply of the wilderness in my health. I am already quite well and eat with savage appetite whatsoever is brought within reach. ^{and} This morning I devoured half of a salmon trout 18 inches long, a slice of ham, half a plateful of potatoes, two biscuits and four or five slices of bread with coffee and something else that I have forgotten, but which was certainly buried in me and lost. For lunch, two platefuls of soup, a heap of fat compound onion hash, two pieces of toast, and 3 or 4 slices of bread, with potatoes, and a big sweet cake, and now at 3 o'clock I am very hungry, a hunger that no amount of wave-tossing will abate. Furthermore, I look forward to fat seals fried and boiled, and to walrus steaks and stews, and doughnuts fried in train oil, and to all kinds of bears and fishy fowls with eager longing. There! Is that enough, grandmother? All my table whims are rapidly passing into the sere and yellow leaf and falling off.

I promise to comfort and sustain you beyond your highest aspirations when I return and fall three times a day on your table like a wolf on the fold. You know those slippery yellow custards -- well, I eat those also!

You must not forget Sam Williams. And now, my love, goodnight. I hope you are feeling strong-hearted. I wish that I could write anything, sense or nonsense, to cheer you up and brighten the outlook into the North. I will try to say one more line or two when we reach the Islands tomorrow.

Love to all. Kiss Annie for me.

[John Muir]

[Letter contained in envelope addressed as follows:

"Mrs. John Muir, care Dr. John Strentzel, Martinez, California",
postmarked St. Paul's Island, Alaska, Jun 4, 1881.