



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

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**Letter from J[eanne] C. C[arr] to John Muir, 1872 Feb 4.**

Jeanne C. Carr

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Oakland, Feb. 4, '72.

Dear John,

The rain falls so gently, I seem to feel the ferns uncoiling, the social companies of pulsatilla whispering to each other just under ground, 'The morning is near', Hepaticas getting ready for their leap into the arms of Spring, under its influence. Just such a rain as fills every moss urn in our northern woods and makes the Hypnum beds so greepp, so green.

Strange, isn't it, that those woods, that beech trunks and hemlock thickets should seem so much more spiritual, than any creature of this occidental world. Hope used to say, when for the fiftieth time my hand would go smoothing a patch of moss in Forest Glen, as one strokes a cat, or caresses an animal, "You were made out of all these things". I believe it is true. I am so possessed at times with the memory of their life, the life I lived with them once when we were rained on and even so glad. If you had written me your glory, glacial letter then, dear John, I couldn't have answered it -- no more can I in this intermediate state, but I should have liked to feel your footstep!

It is beautiful, though, that we can understand each other -- while in such singular apartness, you dwelling in the house of forces, becoming elemental yourself through sympathy, and I living only among such forms of these as are charged with personality. I now and then touch a subtle thread of analogy, which enables me to recognize these humans in the ages ago, in their cast-off forms, and then I can guess what it is to live in Eternity.

My spirit was converted by your lovely sermon, but my flesh isn't, and when your track is from lands of snow to lands of sun, only then shall I be able to follow you. I sent you a reprint of Ned's letter which you will understand it was a joy and a relief to get. And now he is probably at 'Santa Cruz de la Sierra', where he can see the Southern cross, and the eternal snows, and the ever-ascending smoke from the great planetary censers which swing day and night in that grandest of temples. What a world of poetry there is in those Spanish names, both of sense and sound. I hope Ned's temporal discomforts will not blind him to the wonders through which he is passing. He is too young by a dozen years to get the full benefit of such an experience, but you can see from the letter, which I copied word for word, how much manliness it has bred in him.

Charles Stoddard is about starting for the Navigator Islands, there to soak and steep himself in all savagery; too lean to be made a dainty for their Gods, we may expect he will return fattened for the literary shambles. He says he "pines to know John Muir". I think I should enjoy seeing you together.

Dr. Carr took the "Jubilee of the Waters" to the Overland. I expect it will be out next month. I did not think it best to offer the Bear Story for the same, and Charlie S. thought I ought to send it east. I would not send [it] until there was a prospect of its going through in six months or so, consequently it lies in my desk. We were all (some twenty of us) delighted with both papers, but my letter is the best of all. I wish to get a chance to read it to Clarence King, who is 'so near to yet so far' that he seems to elude my touch.

Perhaps if you should try very hard to make me, and I transpare myself, I could see your new heavens and new earth! I challenge it, and am yours always,

J. C. C.

[Jeanne C. Carr]

[See Muir's letter of Dec. 11, 1871]