



1887-02-23

Letter from John Muir to J[anet Moores], 1887 Feb 23.

John Muir

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sparkles on rivers & lakes, light
on the myriad stars of the snow,
light sifting through the angles of
sun-drawn icebergs, light in
glacier caves, inised spray waft-
ing from white waterfalls, and the
light of calm starry nights bebold
from mountain tops dipping deep
into the clear air.

Oye my lassie it is a blessed thing
to go fur in the light of this beauti-
ful world. to see God playing upon
every thing, as a man would play
on an instrument: His fingers
upon the lightning & toward of
my name of sea & sky, and every
thing, making all together
sing & shine in sweet accord, the
one true harmony of the universe
But what need I write so far &
wide, now you are so near, and
when I shall see you
face to face.

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Montezuma Cal.
Feb. 23. 87

My Dear Friend J-

Have you really
turned into a woman, & have you
really come to California, the land
of the sun, & Yosemite & a' that,
through the whirl of all these years.
Seas between us broad has roared,
my lassie, sin' the auld lang syne,
and many a storm has roared
our broad mountains and plains
since last we parted, yet have we
are but little changed in all that
significant, saved from many dangers
that we know, & from many more
that we never shall know - kept
alive and well by a thousand
thousand miracles.

Twenty years! How long and how
short a time that seems today,

How many times the seas have ebbed & flowed with their white breaking waves around the edges of the Continents & islands in this score of years. How many times the sky has been light & dark, and the ground between us been shining with rain, and sun, and snow; and how many times the flowers have bloomed, but, for a' that & a' that, you seem just the same to me, & time & space & events hide you less than the thinnest veil. Marvellous indeed is the permanence of the impressions of those sun-rose days - more enduring than granite mountains. Through all the landscapes I have looked into, with all their wealth of forests, rivers, lakes & glaciers, & happy living faces. Your face Janet is still seen as clear & keenly outlined as on the day I went away on my long walk.

Aye, the auld lang syne is indeed young. Time seems of no avail to make us old except in more outer aspects. Today you appear the same little fairy girl, following me in my walks with short steps as best you can stopping now & then to gather butter-cups, & anemones & ivigemias, sometimes taking my hand in climbing over a fallen tree, threading your way through tall grasses & ferns, & pushing through very small spaces in thickets of underbrush. Surely you must remember those holiday walks, and also your coming into my dark room with light when I was blind, and what light has filled me since that time. I am sure you will be glad to know. The richest sun-gold flooding these Cal. valleys, the spiritual Alpenglow steeping the high peaks, silver light on the sea, the white glancing sun-

Believe me ever truly your
friend John Muir

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I only meant - to tell you that
you were not forgetting. You
think I may not know you at
first sight; nor will you be likely
to recognize me, every experience
is recorded on our faces, in char-
acter of some sort - I suppose -
and if at all telling my face should
be quite picturesque, and marked
enough, to be readily known by
any body looking for me, but when
I look in the glass, I see but little
more than the marks of rough
weather + fasting. Most people
would see only a lot of hair and
two eyes, or one + one half in the
middle of it; like a hillside with
small open spots, mostly overgrown
with shaggy shrubs + chaparral
as this portrait will show.
Wanda peeping past my elbow
asks - "Is that your Papa?" and then

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goes on to say, that it is just like me, only the hair is not curly enough, also that the little Dee, + island sketches are just lovely, and that I must draw a lot just like them for her, I think that you will surely like her. She remarked the other day that she was well worth seeing now, having got a new gown or something that pleased her. She is six years old.

The ranch and the pasture hills hereabouts are not very interesting at this time of year. In bloomtime now approaching the orchards look gay + dolly Verdunish, and the home-garden does the best it can with cabbages + so on all good in a food + shelter way, but about as far from the forests + gardens, of God's wilderness, as brand dolls are from children, I should like to show you my wild

lily + cassiope + Dianthus gardens, and homes not made with hands, with their dairy corral + woods, and streams + other fine furniture and singers, not in cages, but legs + ankles are immensely important on such visits, but unfortunately by most girls are like flowers that have to stand and take what comes, or at best ride on iron rails around + away from what is worth seeing, then they are still something like flowers - flowers in girl's carnival + prairie. I advised you not to come last Friday because the weather was broken, and the telephone was broken, and the roads were muddy, but the weather will soon shine again, and then you + Mary can come, with more comfort + safety. Remember me to Mary +