



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

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1895-04-18

**Letter from Lucy M. Washburn to John Muir, 1895 Apr 18.**

Lucy M. Washburn

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"Near Angels".

Calaveras Co. April 18, 1895.

Dear Mr. Muir.

The precious book came safely, by Mr. Allen's Land. To whom could you have sent it who would enjoy it more keenly, or who would appreciate more fully the honor of the gift? I have never forgotten your kindness to me when I came asking questions about Alaska, and I have often wondered whether you received the magazine I sent you in which the article which owed so much to you was finally published. It never occurred to me that you would think of sending me your book. I am indeed glad to see the volume out, saving for the world some of the many observations with which you only can enrich it.

The book came just at the right time for me, as I was about starting to spend my ten days of school vacation here on the slopes of the great range. It is the only volume I brought with me. Yesterday a drive of thirty-five miles took

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[1]

me through Angels, Murphy's, past the mouth of the Calaveras Cave, down into and along the San Domingo cañon round again to Mr. Keefer's place on the edge of his gravel-mine, where my brother's family including myself are now being entertained. Around the evening fire we read aloud and talked over all you say about this region. I wish it were more, only that I would not like to lessen the space devoted to the Higher Sierra.

This afternoon, sitting on a green slope, looking toward a blue ridge over other slopes clothed with round-topped, low, loose pines, rounder oaks, just at their lightest with vivid, half-grown leaves, and downy ceanothus bushes with their warm snow, the whole as soft a scene as the Catskills - I have been reading your chapter on "A near view of the High Sierra", with the bare peaks, the glaciers, and the alpen-glow. Tempted by this, and as the only little thing I can do to show my grateful appreciation of your gift, I write out for your reading some lines I once wrote that no one else has seen. My sincerely - Lucy M. Washburn  
01972 (San Jose.)

[2]

The alpen glow on Shasta's awful crown!  
Breathless I watched that whitest of all white,  
Eternal snow, dazzling, immaculate,  
Glow softly flushed as inner leaf of rose -  
The smile of majesty - God's look of love.  
Lord, breathe I, what am I, that this thy glance  
Once in a lifetime is vouchsafed to me,  
When most of all thy children far away  
Must live, and pass from thy so glorious earth  
Without one kindling sight like thine supreme.  
Slowly I turned, drawn subtly toward the west,  
Lo! a cloud Shastas, loftier and yet more fair,  
Its snows unfallen, its flush a deeper glow -  
No earth-set base, no path for venturesome foot -  
Mountain of heaven, mingled of snow and fire.  
Father of all, thy best gifts are world-wide,  
No child hast thou to whom thou dost not speak.  
Thy mountains in their fastnesses apart  
Not all can see; far inland lives may pass,  
Shut from thine ocean's voice of majesty -  
But mountains may be weighed, the sea hath bounds,  
One infinite voyage hast thou, and for all  
Thou spreadst thy sky - its sunsets and its stars,  
And its unfathomable deeps of space.

[3]

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