

From Laura Goodman Salverson.  
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My Dear, dear friend:

Your letter just arrived + it was so  
replete with gracious sweetness that I must  
reply at once. I had just learned of the event  
and wondered if I might dare to write about it.  
We women are such odd beings it is not always  
easy to know. But since we always were  
honest with each other you will let me say  
that I quite understand the state of mind  
you must have endured. We all, I think, who  
love innocence + goodness have our moments  
when we dream of little children + what  
frightens us is the dingy second best  
we must offer them.

But in your case my dear you at least  
will not have to fear any <sup>sharp</sup> comings  
in the things that most matter to a child.

Both you + your husband are exceptionally  
good to the little ones — + I know their

will think only of that in the years to come.

To small souls that may mean nothing -  
to great ones everything! The longer I live  
the more I incline to believe that nothing  
matters except to leave behind one a  
sort of autumnal warmth -

And then, too, our vision is so obscured -  
When my dear mother passed through what you  
are now facing (she was nearly fifty) it  
seemed the "last show" so to speak. And  
now the only comfort she has is that bailey

my brother Albert grown tall. who does  
everything for her. gave her her first fine  
clothes; her first fine horse - all the  
nice little foolish things women adore  
in their hearts & which she never had.

I often think of that now & it makes me  
realize that life is perhaps in the keeping  
of a Wisdom wiser than we. all of which  
does not alter our pains & work and

worry but does give us peace now & again.

Yes my dear - you are perhaps "domesticated" more than I - but it is a good thing for the world that there are few "I's".

Life is cruel to me because I cannot be reconciled to the homely existence I yet see to be rich & beautiful... I know it - I feel it but for all that it is a foreign field in which I grow increasingly discontent. And because I have the old Norse, Anglo-Saxon, sense of duty I suffer the more because I don't batting & do it".

I envy those rare souls who live in the world of simple faith - even in the senses - and take joy in the busyness of living. You know what I mean - all this I experience like an actor on the boards I joy for the moment - suffer with the sufferers etc - and come to myself

just a bit grim + inclined to any goal, foul,  
in my secret heart I find none of it worth  
the effort.

A frightful thing surely. For the only vision  
worth while is the true vision pictured  
so grandly in your poem. All men must  
know it instinctively. Smart intellectual  
cleverness is not Wisdom - Sophistry is  
an all-smelling thing - the perfume of  
deceitful innocence if one may so foolishly  
put it - stench would be true except  
that as we say in the North "sweet is  
the selfish of the sinner to himself!"

My dear you are a brave sweet woman  
& long after we are both gone to the dust  
your sweetness will endure through your  
children. It is perhaps the one immortality.  
I shall think of you - clear good thoughts -  
and write you from time to time. I live  
in a spiritual wilderness here but am  
working on my new book. I have a story  
coming out in Feb. of Chaitane - a story told  
of plain folk. I think you will like it &  
see in it what I mean. That I do feel

or rather react to life with a terrible  
sensitiveness. I loose almost flesh  
over a long piece of work, it eats me  
up + is a very real travail, and I  
cannot say I get any great thrill  
out of it.

But it is my life. And as I said  
once in Calgary. Here is my honest  
creed: If I had the choice - plain  
I'd I have not - to live my own  
life full-feling what to me is the  
best + for the privilege had to give  
up all my domestic existence. I'd  
say yes - + do it no matter what  
the tears of the moment.

You see how it is - I work + slave  
for a home + let it go without  
a single tear - it really means  
nothing and yet I love it - a  
peculiar complex state of things.

one week of nothing but honest  
husband drives me into the  
blackest gloom. All the silly  
social things bore me - nothing  
gives me the least satisfaction  
of any lasting account except  
abstract ideas at which I in  
turn laugh!

Such is the stuff, very much  
'badly mixed' as the poet said of  
which I am made. But one thing  
I have, a hot & I think deathless  
hate of the perverted & egotist  
even in myself. And I do not  
believe my way of looking at  
life as it presents to myself is at  
all good or noble!

I am working a difficult book.  
a story of an odd character who  
lived in the 17th century - difficult  
because in this age of suspecting her  
selfless labor will seem only  
silly. I know it was grand.

So perhaps it will make no great  
star - so begging mayhap. As much  
of clean stuff does there hang.  
Also I am getting a reputation  
for too much strength. The magazines  
here pay me the highest price now  
but are scared of my stuff.  
Well I cant abide sickly  
sentiment. And here is the reason.  
Just I may cheer ourselves with

what seems "sickly stuff" + the  
rich + free. It is not sickly but  
heroic in our case. You see? To be  
able to see the outlines of ultimate  
things over the wash tub is not  
sentimentality but power! To a  
Mrs. Wagner it might seem so - and  
by the same token that is why tragic  
things handled by the lucky +  
well-protected of mankind are just  
a sickly jumble of black words!

So now I must away. The Soul of  
all high hearts keep for my  
dear + you remember, I know,  
what the Greeks used to say of  
expectant mothers, "She walks  
with God" So walk proudly!

Sanna S. Palmerson.

author of "The Viking Heart" & other novels.