

Dear Tommy:

Sun. - 3/27/77

The pictures arrived last week while I was on jury duty, and thank you for returning them. There was a little misunderstanding - I was not upset because I knew you would return them. I was concerned because I had not heard from you because the last thing you asked me was if you wrote to me, would I write to you? This meant a great deal to me, and I wondered if things were all right with you and if you did intend to write to me. I would love to hear from you.

After you left at Christmas your Uncle Bill and I talked about it, and realized that he had a "watch cap" and a pair of fleece lined weather gloves which would have kept you warmer. We were concerned about your health, as well as your comfort.

I have been on jury duty this past week and it will continue another five weeks. It is interesting in that I have met a lot of people, but haven't been empaneled on a jury as yet. The only one I have been called to be present during the empaneling, where I could have been called, was for "driving under the influence" and I have often wondered what I would do and say under the circumstances if I were called. I guess God does not think I am ready with the answer yet, because although I have been in several courtrooms during the empanelment of a jury for such a charge (we call it a 502), my name has never been called. Two gentlemen with whom I had talked, had luncheon and become friendly, were empaneled on it.

Things are going along with us at the usual rather irregular, unsteady pace. I am going up to the AA hall tonight to a social. Bill does not like to get out - he likes having company here. We really enjoyed your visit with us.

As you probably know, your grandmother has returned to Detroit, but it seems probable that she may return to California. This is not my affair. I have my own life, my own responsibilities, and my own problems. If she does return, we shall of course see each other, and I hope all will go well.

Honey, write me a letter. It is rather difficult to write too much right now - I am doing jury duty, am expecting guests for dinner tonight, and the house is anything but ready. We are going to have salmon steaks and mashed potatoes and a salad, and a vegetable. And would love to have you with us!

Bill is feeling better, but is still not eating as much as I wish he would, but he does the best he can. He has been doing some work in the yard, since we had some rain. We need a great deal more, but are grateful for what we received.

Tommy, take care of yourself. I shall be praying for you, for your grant to be given if it is God's will, and for your welfare and happiness. I don't know how you feel about other's prayers, but here is one I love "Do your best, I'll do the rest. Keep your heart open for love. Don't be afraid to trust me. I hear you. I will give you every assistance you need. Don't analyze the results of your best. Let Me be the judge. Look for me in others. Be quiet, gentle, kind, tolerant. You are not the center of the universe. Don't take yourself too seriously." I love a lot of prayers, and another is "I place myself and all my affairs lovingly in the hands of my Father" - since that includes you, honey, you are now, in my heart, in the hands of our Father. God bless and keep you.

Lovingly, Aunt Rara

May 12 1977

Tommy, dear:

When I received your very welcome letter, I was on jury duty, and it was in Glendale, which is about 16 miles from here...I am behind in many of my duties, but my letter to you is not a duty, it is a pleasure...it was a joy to get your letter, and I have thought so often of what I would write as soon as I have time, so tonight, it is almost 11 and I am taking the time.

I am pleased to hear from Eunice Deane, through your father and mother, I believe, that your plans to go to Israel are really going to materialize. It must pbe wonderful to have such a trip to the Holy Land, to walk the path of our Lord and his Diciples, to have this to look forward to, and also to know the people of Israel, and I think the idea of staying in a kibbutz is FANTASTIC. I was of course not aware that you have relatives, however distant, in Israel, but I do so hope you will get to meet and know each and every one of them.

Your thoughts about the youngsters in your Activity Group calling you "Dad" are understandable, honey, but there are times when youngsters - and we are all children until the day we die, Need so badly to have a surrogate parent that it is really not a disservice to the parent for you to stand in, in time of need. And sometimes the need is not so obvious to you. Not too long ago, in a moment of stress with a friend of mine, not that much younger than I, I said to her, "Let me be your mama for a little while", and she has told me since that it gave her the strength and hope she needed...we do our best to share our experience, strength and hope, and our Faith in our Higher Power, with others, not necessarily just those who believe as we do, but with all...my faith walks the same path as yours, I just go a little different way, at times...it all leads to God. Now I sound "preachy", but I do know that at times guilt is not necessary for something which is good but we are not prepared to accept as good...perhaps you will never be..that is your prerogative, but to listen and to hear may help.

In the short time you were with us, Tommy, you were a blessing to us. We often (and for many, many years) have felt the lack of children of our own, and we loved and do love you. Your ideas about your showing of love - I hope they never change. Everyone needs love, and everyone needs to be told "I love you" - even the most unlovable, and that is hard for me, but it is God's way, and God's love. And I cannot always love the unlovable, and it causes hardship for me - Here is a little poem which reflects pretty much how I feel about it -

Sometimes I do not want to think of God as being totally forgiving, Because I do not want to totally forgive. I mean, if a person has done wrong, he should be punished, shouldn't he? Else, why should I bother to do right? God has laws, my reasoning goes, and if man breaks them, and God forgives and forgives, why should the laws ever be kept? Of what validity are they? But sometimes, a little bit of grace shines into my mind, and I realize that the keeping and breaking of God's laws are their own punishment and reward. And anyone who has broken himself against the law of God needs all the forgiveness and love I can give him.

This will be a short letter, because it is getting late, and I hve a long and rather difficult day tomorrow. Things are about the same with us - I can't get Bill to the doctor, but I saw my doctor yesterday, and talked with him, and he told me that the symptoms point to Bill's having emphysema. It frightens me, because your Uncle T.Walker's wife, Goldie, died of emphysema several years ago, and it was difficult...T.W. died in 1966 and she died in 1972. But the doctor told me that if Bill would not go to any doctor, I must again turn him over to God, and let him be. This I am once again doing.

I finished my jury duty. I did not sit on a jury in the six weeks, but was called on one which was for "driving under the influence", and although I have been on jury duty several times in recent years, I have never before been called into the jury box for such a charge, and I had wondered, prayed, and asked for help in case I should be. Although my family and friends are all aware that I am an alcoholic and in the program, it is not something I go around advertising (my doctor also knows, of course, and through him many people have been sent to the program). Anyway, when I was asked why I was a "total abstainer", I had my answer ready, I thought- it could be religious, personal or medical, and all would be true, but when the judge questioned me, (after sitting in the jury room praying, and then in the jury box praying, for the words of my mouth to be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord), the words of their own volition came - I am an alcoholic. I was questioned by the judge and the attorneys, both, for about twenty minutes. Then, I was excused by the defense attorney - and wondered (even tho I am told not to ask why, just to do) why this had happened to me. The next day I had lunch with a man whose father had been an alcoholic. Another day I had lunch (at her home) with a woman whose husband had been an alcoholic - the first man, the father, was now dead - the second, the wife had divorced, but she had children who were still affected by the disease - not having it, but having lived with it), and then a few days later when we were released early, I was sitting in my car, looking for a meeting nearby, and a woman I had never seen before came up and asked me if I were not the lady questioned by the judge and attorneys about drinking, and I said I was, and she asked if I were a member of AA, and I said I was and was looking for a meeting, and she asked "May I go with you?" So, we went to a meeting where I knew no one when I went in, came out with new friends, and took someone who needed the spiritual help which is so freely and lovingly given, and knew why I was called to do jury duty only to sit it out and to be called on a case where I could not serve. God's ways are certainly not always so clear to me - I flounder much of the time, but God's love is there, and his caring is there for us all.

My, how I do go on! I wanted to share that experience with you, and now, my dear Tommy, please write when you can, and I will answer...perhaps not as soon as I would like, but as soon as I can -

God bless and keep you, in all ways, at all times.

Lovingly,

Aunt Rotha & Uncle Bill

Aunt Rotha and Uncle Bill

The cats are still monsters!

Postmark: 8 July 1977

Mrs. William E. Mackay
12769 Muscatine Street
Arleta, California 91331

Dearest Tommy:

I am fearfully lax in answering your letter of May 27, but this has been a very busy time, and I have kept procrastinating and procrastinating, until here it is the 8th of July, and in re reading your letter, which, incidentally did NOT include your itinerary, I have not the slightest idea where you are! Therefore, I shall send it to the address given in your letter, with instructions on the envelope to forward if necessary, and hope that sometime in the not too far distant future it will reach you.

All is well at our house. Bill is still about the same - he is perhaps losing ground, a little, but I keep praying, and trying to do what is necessary for me to do, and asking God's guidance in the situation - he just went go to a doctor.

We are busy with the little things - the toilet needs repairing, the battery on the car ran down and had to be recharged, the television was out of kilter, the washing and ironing have to be done, and the books returned to the library, and the shopping done, and errands attended to. It is time consuming, and good to be able to do it. Our friend Eleanor who was here for Christmas (although you may not remember her) is here almost every weekend, and last night I went down and met her after she got off work, and we swam in her (apartment house) pool, and then had dinner and played parcheesi. She is very lonely. Eunice is here almost every weekend, and she is leaving for Greece on the 20th of August. She is well, happy, and I believe has a good life.

I am glad your grandmother was with you for a while, and that you apparently enjoyed her cooking and I hope having her with you. Sometime people, particularly, family, can be awfully hard to take. I have come to the conclusion that there is a great deal wrong with each of us, and if I can see my shortcomings clearly, and spend more time asking God to remove them, it will keep my eyes off the shortcomings of others, but sometimes - oh, sometimes - there are those who are "loud and aggressive people" whom I must avoid at all costs for my own sanity. And I must do it without guilt or guile. If I remember at all times God is on my side, and on the side of the other also, it helps.

So much for this, dear Tommy. Just a note which I hope reaches you - perhaps in a remote land, but as I said your letter confused me - will you be ready for Israel or is your Mission somewhere else - I believe you said that it was not - in the early part of next year? Please remember to write to us, wherever you are, and if you get to this part of the world, we are here, and we love you.

God's blessings on you - as a friend of mine says "angels on your pillow"....

Ruth
Aunt Rotha and Uncle Bill

(and of course, our nutty cats - how could they be otherwise?)

*I haven't seen or heard
from Jim & Roy*

Dearest Tom :

1978

Here it is 4:30 in the morning of January 16, and I am still awake - I have been asleep and awake, but fortunately I have fixed up this bedroom so I can either work or sleep in here without bothering you, Uncle Bill too much, and at my age sometimes sleep does not come too easily. I learned long ago that I won't die without sleep, so the best thing is to adjust to it, and to accomplish something if I can...the cat, the little mama cat, Cricket, is at the door trying to scratch her way in - she also is restless...it has been pouring rain. We had a drought. Now we have "big plenty" as my mother used to say. We have had over 12 inches in the past week and expect another deluge tomorrow afternoon. I lay and thought of how things are around here - the car needs some work and I had tried to get it done Sat. without success, and have an appointment to take it in tomorrow - rivers of water in the intersections notwithstanding. The house is warm and dry. We don't have anything out in the weather which will be ruined. We got the trash out yesterday. The old dead tree, which you probably did not notice, in the "South Forty", and which Bill had tried without success to chop or saw down, was blown down one night and rested very gently on the fence the next morning - neatly eaten off at the ground by the gopher which Bill has been trying to trap...it is amazing how things are taken care of when one can relax and let God take care of them...with me it was simply a matter of priorities - and that old tree was way down on the list. As a matter of fact, last spring I planted morning glories around it, and while they did not flourish, they did grow, and we had some pretty little blue ones climbing it for a time...and the gopher did a good job for us too, while we were trying to "get him".

^{REW} Your cousin Beverly, once removed, whose husband was paralyzed last summer while swimming in the Colorado River, near Blythe California, is doing well - they have found a muscle in the abdomen and one in the right leg which respond - he injured several vertebrae and there is a question of how much damage was done (he has had surgery) and the prognosis is now the same as before the surgery - at the end of 18 months they should know if he will be completely paralyzed, partial-paralyzed, or completely well eventually. He is handling it as well as can be expected, and a lot can be expected from a young and vital man such as he - he is 33 or 34, and has always been an athlete, a fine cabinet maker, gardener, and is still in business for himself as an insurance broker...his business is going downhill as the result of his continued absence - he is the outside contact and his partners take care of the other aspects of the business - so Beverly is taking the insurance examination this week and hopes to open up another office in the same building as Ted's, and take him in his wheelchair each day, and with special equipment, fix it so he can do business by telephone - she will have to get another office on the first floor (theirs is on the second) because she cannot maneuver the stair with his wheelchair. She has courage, and he has too, but I suspect it grows thin at times. They have a little girl, who will be 11 in May. She was here over the holidays. We have not seen Bev and Ted since the accident but Eunice goes to see them regularly, takes our gifts, and I write them. I am preparing fruit cake so I can send one to him, as he loves them. I made some for Christmas, but somehow or other, I did not have one when time came to send their gifts. Also, I am going to have one for Jim (Roz is still on her diet and looks wonderful, as you saw if you saw them over the holidays.) I get confused about you children...not you, or your Uncle Bob, or your Uncle Bill, or Jim and Roz because I know you. But the ones I have not met personally - your mother and father, the wives of the other boys, the other children of your generation whom I have not met - I find I confuse you...perhaps I should say THEM.

2 We had a good Christmas and New Years. As usual we had others here. Eleanor was with us, and on Christmas, her two children who are 15 and 17 were with us. Eleanor asked me to send you greetings and good wishes. Perhaps you remember her and perhaps you don't. She is the friend who shared the Christmas with us that you shared with us...or was it Thanksgiving? I am having a little trouble with my memory, but am learning to live with it...these things are not the earth shaking things which at one time I thought they were!

All is well with us. It is now quiet, there is no rain, no wind, only stillness. The furnace went on, and then went off and when it went off, and Cricket gave up at the door and went back into the other part of the house, it is ~~is~~ so quiet and lovely. We are pretty well under water, but we need it. We are to have another ten days rain, and we may have troubles - there are landslides and wash-outs...but we will survive. Eunice and Eleanor both called tonight to tell me they were home and safe and to warn me not to go out. I had no intention of going out. Am supposed to go out and play bridge tomorrow night, but the friend with whom I play (at whose apartment we play) called today and I told her that if it is as bad tomorrow night as today I won't be there. She is a new friend - I have three new friends outside the program, which is a rather new experience with me - except for one I made at the jury duty last year. It is a good experience. I found that only after I told them of my commitment to the program, which of course is my path to my God, was I comfortable with them. In return, I have learned things about them which make it easier to become friends at a deeper level. The friend I made when on jury is the result of my being called to sit in the jury box and be questioned on a "driving under the influence" trial. I have served on many juries since I have been a member of AA, but this is the first time I have ever been called on a DUI case, and I had wondered what I would do if I were called. As had happened in the past, I sat there praying that I would be able to do God's will, that if I were called I would be strong enough, and sure enough of my place with God, to do what I had to do, and petrified at the idea of exposing my alcoholism before a crowd of people - I had had lunch with many of them, played pinochle or bridge with them, talked about the events of the day with, and even shared some personal experiences with them. And I was scared of being "found out"...I sat and prayed, and they called me, and I went up to the jury box, still praying for wisdom to know God's will, and the courage to do it, and when they asked me why I did not drink alcohol, as they did everyone who had raised their hand to the question of abstinence, I merely said, "Because I am an alcoholic"...it surprised me as much as others, I am sure. The judge, a woman, questioned me, both attorneys questioned me - re my experience with jails (I have spoken in jails, have gotten people out of jail and in one instance was the cause of a woman going to jail - rather the instrument than the cause) but have never been in jail. They finally excused me - the defending attorney rather surprisingly, I thought. Then, later, this friend came to me (I had been to her home for lunch with her before this) and told me about her husband whom she had divorced who drank heavily and her daughter about whom she was concerned. And another man asked me to lunch and we discussed his father. And another woman came to my car one day when we were excused early and asked me if I were a member of AA (we do not identify ourselves as member of AA unless it is a definitely indicated thing) and I told her I was and was looking for a meeting in the area, and she asked if she could go with me - when I told my group about it later, I said I did not go to jury duty in Glendale - some distance from here - this year to do jury duty but to tell the people about the disease of alcoholism. It was a very rewarding experience - once again it makes me so happy to know that the age of miracles is still with us - as long as God is with us, so are miracles -

As usual, any letter I write of any length is not written at one sitting - it is now noon, Tuesday, the sun is shining, and although the weather man tells us that another storm is on its way, right now it is lovely. The powers that be seem to be in discord about our drought condition.

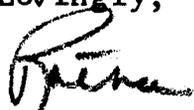
Your Great-great Aunt Eunice in Dallas called the other day, and she asked about you. I hope that you will meet her and Uncle Lynn (Reynolds) while they are with us. They are lovely Southern aristocracy - Eunice, your Great-aunt Eunice, says they are really Western, but Dallas is not a western state or state of mind - it is definitely southern - perhaps not Southern in the sense of Georgia or Alabama, or such, perhaps just in its entity as Dallas - it is to some extent a state of mind. I lived there for years before I came out here, and have been back frequently since and although my social ventures there have been almost entirely with the Reynolds' and their neighbors and friends, I did attend one large AA meeting there, where I spoke, and I found that it is apparently the same with others...it is an interesting city and people - and I have never felt entirely cut off from them.

I hope you will enjoy your tour of Colorado, and we will hear from you about what you are doing, and what it is doing to you. Our reactions are usually as telling and as important as our actions are, I think.

Dear Great-nephew, I am always pleased to hear from you and shall look forward to another letter soon.

May God bless and keep you in his Grace...

Lovingly,



Rotha and Bill
12769 Muscatine St.
Arleta, Calif. 91331

Phone 213 - 767-1874

Postmark: 21 February 1978

Tommy, dear:

Your welcome letter came yesterday - no, I do not agree that you are wicked and slothful. I believe in a strict policy of first things first, and that NO ONE can possibly do all things at all times, in the order we would have them. There are always things which have to be delayed, procrastinated, or sometimes even junked because other priorities come first. Please don't be feeling guilty because of time between receiving and answering a letter - you are a very dedicated and intense boy, and your life is pretty full.

I was rather concerned about your surgery and the resulting pain. You did not mention what the surgery was for - of course, I am curious ;if you can tell me. It would be easier, perhaps, for me to understand why the resulting pain. I hope that by the time you are in receipt of this letter that you have found some let up in the pain, and are sleeping - time will heal the surgical wound if there is no aftermath, of course, and I surely hope there is not. Will you please let us know that you are all right??? Or, if you are not, please let me know that too -

Aunt Eunice is the wife of Lynn Richard Reynolds. They live at 5207 Milam St. Dallas, Texas, 75206. They are a dear couple. They will be 82 and 81 in April, and they are still taking care of themselves, and their home. Uncle Lynn does all the driving, and they have a tiny car (one) garage, which is just big enough to drive the car in, slide out carefully on the driver's side and edge to the doors, and then climb up on the fender of the car, slide over and down outside the garage. And he is still, at 82, doing just that! It is amazing. I talked with Aunt Eunice recently and she said that the snow was so deep that Uncle Lynn wanted to go out and shovel snow, and she had persuaded him not to. They also mow their own yard, cut the hedges and trim the trees - Or they were doing that when I was there last which was last year. Also, they are filled with love, and are very accepting people. I believe that we also are accepting people, Tommy, and I hope that you know that Bill and I - as well as Eunice Deane, accept and love you and are glad that you are our nephew and that we know you.

You sound like you are doing well in your missionary work. Yes, it is good to know that you have helped someone along the way to a new beginning. That has meant a great deal to me over the years, even though I realize and acknowledge that I am only a vessel, and that God is doing the work, it is a wonderful feeling to be God's vessel. And I have learned over the years too that my time is not always God's time. There are women with whom I have worked, and have been unable to get to first base, who have been shown the way by someone else and there was a time when I felt that I was inadequate, or that God was smiling on someone else more than on me, but now I know that God's time is not my time and that when and how a person is given the sunlight of seeing and understanding (in our own small finite way) God's way, is not mine to question. I found a little poem many years ago which helped me with this when I was grieving over someone whom I had loved and cherished and wanted to walk with me in the sunlight, who went back into the darkness, which I have shared with others as it was shared with me by a dear friend.

It is: Should your brother choose to stray by the valley road,
Walk with him a little way, ease him of his load.
Should he keep the valley road, and shun the mountain air,
You must give him back his load, bless and leave him there.

Thank you Tommy for your blessing. It means a great deal to us...both Bill and myself. I hope that your little candystriper comes into the fold, and is happy. I hope that you are happy, at peace and content with your God, as I am with mine...for the greatest blessing that one can give another, I believe, is to bless him and leave him with his own understanding of God - I have a dear friend who is having a problem with God. She claimed to be an atheist for many years. I did not press her - I never spoke of it to her, but spoke as I would to anyone. She was having trouble with money, handling money, and I told her of the miracle (one of the many miracles God has shown us) of the loaves and the fishes as it has happened in my own life - there is ALWAYS enough money and I never know how except that I know that my source is God. She said I cannot say God, but in Star Wars*, the movie, there was a FORCE mentioned - could I say FORCE? I told her that God is to her a personal thing and she can call him anything she likes in my book, and she said, all right He is the Force (for kGood) and since then she is finding that with her faith that the Force will take care of her needs, and with her cooperation of walking the way she thinks he would have her walk, the situation is being resolved. This is a small thing, perhaps, but I believe that any human problem which is given over to God will be taken care of and I am sure you believe it too, and I hope you are able to put it to work.

No, honey, I don't know Karen. I have not seen your Uncle Bill since he was a very young man - about your age - just out of the Marine Corps, going home... I hope that Karen does find her place, and I know that her being in touch with you is a good thing for both of you.

Dear Tommy, you are so young, and so dear - thank you for letting us love you.

Your loving Great Aunt

Rotha *Rotha*

*Star Wars

Dearest Tommy:

I was so pleased to hear from you, and - like you - feel a little delinquent in replying, but my correspondence goes a little ahead of me, and I have been trying to take it in sequence...I did take one out of sequence - I had a letter from your grandmother, and I immediately replied to it, as I think I already owed her a letter - I look at that row of "Is" above, and realize that when I was in school we were very solemnly instructed, when writing personal letters, to avoid the pronoun I, and particularly at the beginning of a sentence!!

Easter was lovely, except that I did not get to go to church...I watched the TV services. I stove in the front of the Olds on February 16, and have been without transportations since then. We have been fortunate, in that someone has taken me to market every week, to meetings regularly, to the doctor when it was necessary, and even to the library...today a friend came over with her ;two children, 7 and 8, and we went out for lunch at a Carl Jr. which the kids seem to like, then to the library and then shopping (market) and then back here, and they played with the mama cat, while the boy cat hid from them, and had a very pleasant afternoon.

Easter, your Uncle Jim and Roz and your Aunt Eunice Nutt were here, as well as Eleanor, whom you met at the Christmas Day at our house a year ago last year. I could not get out - ;a friend had taken me to market the day before - so I watched the services at sunrise, got up and got with the preparations for dinner quite early, and we had a leg of spring lamb, from New Zealand, with gravy and mashed potatoes, and vegetables dressing, and the works. They must have enjoyed the food, because the lamb was completely gone, and then we had a very quiet and lovely day. I believe everyone enjoyed it, and I think it was one of the most peaceful, contented, "filled with gratitude" days I have ever had. There was no feeling of stress or conflict, and this is so unusual in this day of stress and conflict. Everyone left early, but they left our house feeling very fulfilled, and over-filled with love.

Your grandmother talks of coming out here next fall. I guess it is this fall now. And Jim says Bob and his family will be out here for a couple of months this summer. I wonder if you will be able to come out? How is your mission coming? Are you happy and fulfilled in your work, Tommy? I hope you are, and that it gives you feeling of a good job well done, as I so often have with my work in the program. My doctor (now he is my ex-doctor, because our health insurance group designated another for us), called me the other day to consult with me in a "professional capacity"...one of his colleagues, whom I know, had a patient with a drinking problem, and he wanted to refer her to me. I have given him permission to do so, and did so again. She called me and I referred her to a couple of meetings and she ;said she would call me about it, after she had attended one. She is a medical doctor's wife. I hope she does call back, but she may not. We do not always know whether or not we have helped someone, but we know that we have planted a seed for that person to find his or her way to a God who is loving and kind, and who cares, and who will help in one's hour of need. She sounded sincere, but in my years of this sort of thing, I have moments of doubt, and I reflect, with more understanding on the cry, "I believe, help me Thou, in my unbelief!" This is a very painful thing...

Bill is about the same, except that he still gets skinnier, after I had decided that he could not POSSIBLY get any thinner. I am still taking up his pants so he can keep them up. But he is still up and around and taking care of as much around the house as he can.

I have written to Aunt Eunice (Reynolds) several times asking if she has replied to your letter, or if she is going to, and she has not answered my question. She writes, but she does not say. I may be going down there later this spring - have to get some kind of transportation first, and it may depend on what it costs us to do that, whether or not I can go..I hope I can go as they are getting up in years, and I am not getting any younger

You are in a beautiful part of the countryh, I should think. Tommy write when you can, and remember us in your prayers, as we remember you...thank you for the lovey prayer you sent me some time ago.

God bless and keep you, my dear nephew...

We love you.

Aunt Rotha and Uncle Bill

SUBJECT

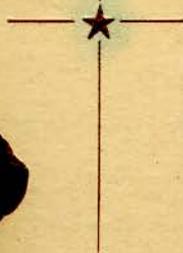
DATE

STATION

FROM

TO

Christmas, Peace



Quality  CREST

P

242

MADE IN U.S.A.

20

Dearest Tom -
I'm afraid I failed
to reply to your
last letter - it has
been a year of illness
& problems & I've been
behind - but all is
over, on a daily basis
and I hope to hear
from you again soon.
We love you and
don't want to lose
contact -
God bless & keep
you.

Tommy, dear

With all good wishes
for a
Blessed Christmas
and a
Happy New Year.

Aunt Patna
Uncle Bill

POSTMARK: 13 December 1978

My dear dear sister:

March 10, 1979
Rotha MacKay

It is a little after 8 on Saturday morning, and last night I called Jim and told him I would try to get down today if I could get someone to stay with Bill but I was up most of the night with a light on his chest, trying to dry up the fluid and today I am beat, so talked with Eunice and she and I will try to get down tomorrow...I know she will be there - I will be if I am able.

Dear Opal, I love you so very much, and I know you love me - other things don't matter much, do they? Lately I have been remembering so much of our early childhood - like the time we spent on Briscoe's ranch, and the time we spent in Atoka and the summer we went to see Grandma Brooks with Aunt Ted and Uncle John in the covered wagon - how many people do you suppose are around now who can say they have made a trip in a covered wagon? Remember our going out and collecting cow chips to cook the dinners and how good everything tasted? And how close the stars were? And how the coyotes howled, and how you and I were always into something behind Uncle John and Aunt Ted's backs - and smirking about how smart we were to put something over on them? It seems to me that we slept in the wagon and they slept outside, but I am not sure. I remember coming home and how glad I was to see T. Walker and I did not kiss him because he was at an age where little boys did not like to be kissed, and how much I wanted to kiss him. I remember our wishing on the first stark at night, and every night, after we had been gone for a very short time, I was wishing to be home when we waked up, and you went along with it, although you really were not homesick as I was, and were really enjoying it...you were just being good to your little sister. And the time that Willis boy stuck his "dinkus" through a hole in the barn and we were so shocked and scared and scared to tell mama about it - I don't think we even discussed it between ourselves - we just ran. And the time we let the old cow get into the feed and she foundered, and mama had to get the vet to cut a slit in her to let the air out? We thought she was going to die, and we went and hid...and how you liked to have your hair with a big ribbon in it, and would let mama do it for you, and I would squall like a scalded cat when she did mine - but she did it anyway. And when we used to play out in the woods behind the house in Atoka and look for "sheep shallows" and eat them - they were tart and green tasting, and we loved them. And TWalking asking mama one time when she was out of humor with all of us, and she said "I wish I never had to hear the word mama again" and TW said, can we call you "Mrs. Hoppy" - for Mrs. Hopkins who lived near...and he called Ray Jr. Ray Judy and locked himself in the bedroom and dressed himself, because Ray Judy could.. even though Ray Judy was older, and he (TW) came out a little mis-dressed...he was a sweet little boy and I don't remember being particularly loving to him - but I did love him so very much...and I don't remember being particularly loving to you, but I loved and do love you very much...I guess, from what Eunice says I was not particularly loving to her, but I did and do love her very much - life looks so different in retrospect, doesn't it?

Opal, I do so want to get to see you. I NEED to see you - to tell you how much I love you and how I wish I had not put you away from me when you were here before - but that is like wishing ~~we~~ were stronger, or better, or something else, in the past. All I can say now is that I regret every little hurt I have ever given or done you, and that behind it all, no matter how hateful the words or actions, there was always the knowledge of love - that I am grateful for, and that I know the same applies to you. Enough of that, dear one...I have said it.

March 12, 1979
Rotha McLean

Dear dear Opal:

My thoughts have been in the past for days - all DO YOU REMEMBER???

Do you remember the beautiful blue dress you had made from the material Aunt Eunice sent when you were about 14? You were so proud of it...

Do you remember how we used to go out in the prairie, you and TW and I, and look for flowers in the spring, and how sweet the black eyed susans and the sweet williams smelt, and all the others we found which were open only for a day or so, and then closed up, but were so lovely while they were open...and the big tarantula that we thought was following us one time? And the little desert animals we found and followed and watched, and never did find out what they were?

(the cow)

And Ole Sloppy Slow - you named her, because she was so slow and so sloppy and we were always trying to get out of having to go get her in the afternoon because she meandered home so slowly and we had so many things to do - like sitting around telling stories, or funning up and down creek (dry) beds - remember the time there was a flash flood up the creek somewhere, and it came down like a river, and we were on the wrong side and had to wait until it had gone down enough for us to cross? Mama was worried about us, but she probably did not come looking or she would have found us - on the other side of the creek? We had happy times there on the ranch that summer. Grandma came and stayed with us part of the time I remember...although I dont remember much about her - except that she was "odd".

I dont remember any chickens, but I seem to remember hunting eggs...and do you remember the desert bird which fluttered along the ground for a long time and we nearly burst ourselves trying to catch it, and then when it got far enough away, it flew away...we had found its eggs in a nest in the ground, and it did a lovely job of getting us away from them...I dont remember many birds, but I am sure there were many...

Every time we play the old hymns (and we do a lot now with Bill sick, it seems to relax him) I am reminded of the little church - "The Little Brown Church in the Wildwood" is the one which brings back the sharpest memories, for some reason.

We were inseparable as children, Opal, and I feel as close to you now as then - and we thought little of love or loving, and were only aware that it (something certain and sure and comforting) was there...and that we were part of it, and dear one, we are still a part of it, and it is still there, warm and sweet and comforting. I am glad you are my sister...I am glad you were given to me as a sister...I am grateful for your love, and that I can give of mine to you so freely - the love that is only for you, and could never never go to anyone else.

You are daily (and hourly) in my thoughts and in my heart. I hold you in my prayers, and know that God's will is right and good, and that you are in his loving arms...how I wish I could put my arms around you now, and tell you in person that I love you - but you know I do -

God bless and keep you, my dearest dearest sister. I love you.

Rotha Lee

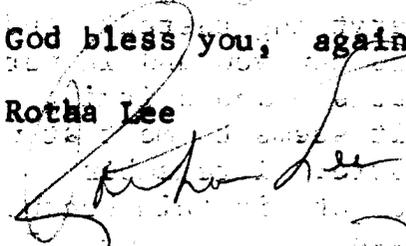
I have been writing this while stripping the bed and getting the linens in the machine, and time is passing. I want to get it in the mail today.

When you receive this, you will know hether or not I was able to get down to see you. If I canmt, dear one, it will not be because I did not make every effort, and strain every possibility to do so. I am praying that I shall, and now once again, I am "walking in helplessness", with the knowledg that our Lord is walking with me, as he is with you, in loving comforting caring.

God bless you, comfort you, and love you...as you know He does...and I love you as my dear dear sister who has her own, her very own place in my heart that no one else could ever touch.

God bless you, again, I love you.

Rotha Lee



*These are
our
kisses*

X X X X
X X X X
X X X X

*and many
more*

many

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Alliance of Television Film Producers

Dear Children (Nephews & families)
Here are the two letters which were
returned to me after your mother's
demise. I did not open them as I
was afraid I might either be tempted
to edit or with hold, as they might
seem peculiar or too emotional in
the present context. They were deeply
emotional and my present emotional
state is fragile -
Your uncle Bill continues to improve so
quickly and fully its like a miracle -
He can watch T.V., read, carry on an
intelligent conversation and has
again resumed his status as the
Scottish Laird of the Manor. We
rate his going it would not surprise
me to find him out plowing up
the "South Jersey", which is over-
grown with weeds - or at least
overseeing the job -

Please write when you can. Remember
that as your aunt and great aunt I feel very
close & much a part of you - and love you
all very dearly - even you whom I've
yet to meet -

Sincerely
Aunt Lorna -

F-19-79

Dear Tommy:

It was good to hear from you, after so long. I know that you wrote me last, but your Uncle Bill died a few weeks after your grandmother did, and losing a sister and my husband so near each of which would have been very difficult to accept, has taken its toll. God works through us, though, and I am accepting His will. Life goes on, and I go on.

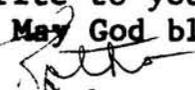
Am pleased to hear about your ~~one~~ ^{one}. No, we have had no news of you or of her recently. We see Jim and Roz occasionally, but as you know, they now have young Justin, who is almost 7 months old, who was premature, and who has been somewhat delicate, and he pretty much occupies their minds and their time. However, congratulations, and we hope some time to meet your intended, and to see you again.

As to your spending Thanksgiving with Aunt Eunice and Uncle Lynn, Tom, I must remind you that they are in their 80s and that they are getting quite fragile. They do practically no entertaining, and as you are not known to them, it might be difficult for them if you just dropped by. I would not take it for granted, but perhaps if you write again (I was in Dallas in the early summer, and Aunt Eunice said she had had a letter from you but had not replied) and they ask you, specifically, to spend Thanksgiving with them, or if you suggest it and they don't take you up on it, perhaps you had better give it the go by.

If you are interested in getting to know some of your relatives, the Morrow boys in Hawley are much more your age and are still of this world. They are quite prosperous, and seem to be very outgoing, and you would be more likely to get a warm reception from them. Jack and Jiggs Morrow and their families live near Hawley. They have a large, prosperous ranch and they breed horses (or did), and cattle, and grow wheat and cotton and they did have a soil bank. They are in the phone book if you would like to call them and introduce yourself over the phone, or if you wanted to visit, you might drop Jack and Rebecca a line. Jack is the head of the clan there.

Also in Silverton Texas, the Brooks farm is still occupied by one of the Brooks family, but I don't know which one. If you were in that area and asked around, you could find out, or you may have it in your genealogy plat. There were a lot more Brooks' than Morrows. Either branch of the family would make interesting study. If you learn anything interesting or specific about them, let me know. I have not returned to my genealogy study, as for the past year ~~for~~ or rather, several years, as Bill was so ill for so long, I have not had time for any outside interests, and now I am deep in the process of building some sort of basis for life, without any one close to me. Eunice and I are the only ones left of our generation, as are Aunt Eunice and Uncle Lynn the last of theirs. It takes adjustment.

Thank you honey for writing at such length about your plans and your life. I am interested, and perhaps when I am further along on this road, I can sit and write to you about it...right now, just thank you for sharing it with me. May God bless and keep you.

Love, Aunt  Rotha