

Read

Letters Perfect

Grey Owl's
P.O.

A North American Indian, ex-sniper in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, to a nurse in the English hospital where he had recovered from wounds:

February 3, 1918

DEAR MISS NURSE:

NEARLY four months now the Canada geese flew south and the snow is very deep. The little wee sorryful animals I tol you about sit around me to-night, I guess they like to see me workin. I seen my old old trees and the rocks that I know and the forest that is to me what your house is to you.

I wisht youd ben here to see when I got back. The Injuns had their tents at the Head of the lake. They came out and looked at me and the chief took me by the hand and said How, and they all come up one at a time and shake hans and say How. They ast me nothin about the War but said they would dance the Morning Wind dance, as I just came from East and that is the early morning wind on the lakes.

Gee I'm lucky to be able to travel the big woods agen. To us people the woods and big hills and the Northern lights and the sunsets are all alive and we live in the spirit of the woods like no white person can do. The big lakes we travel on; we set our beaver traps on the little lonely-lakes with a ring of big black pines standin in rows always lookin north like they was watchin for somethin that never comes, same as an Injun. They are real to us and when we are alone we speak to them and are not lonesome, only thinkin always of the long ago days and the old men. So we live in the past and the rest of the world keeps goin by. For all

their modern inventions they can't live the way we do and cant read the sunset and hear the old men talkin in the wind. I wonder if all this means anythin to you and I hope you wont laugh at it anyway.

March 20, '18

WELL it is a soft moon, so I lay up today in my camp and write some more to your letter. The spring birds waken me up in the morning, they eat my meat hangin outside too, but they are welcom to it. A long time I didnt see them and I am too glad to be back wher I can get meat and be where they is birds. A singing bird comes and sings an says "I do this an I do that an things are so with me" an I will lisen an forget there is no sun, until the bird goes, then I will sit and think and smoke for hours an say to myself, thats good, I am ~~an~~ an Injun and that bird sang for me. When the morning wind rises and the morning star hangs on the edge of the black swamp to the east, tomorrow, I will be on my snowshoe trail. Good-bye.

— ANA-QUON-ESS

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