

Mrs. Katharine Weber  
108 Beacon Road  
Bethany, CT 06524

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Dear Kathy,

Thanks for thinking to send us your good story in the New Yorker. What a promising debut for your first fiction!

That reminds me, as I was reminded of other things while reading, and it makes me wonder if you have a basis in fact for it.

You are a chip off the old block! Your paternal grandfather was a fine writer. He said much in relatively short things in the Times, letters and oped. Your mother and your father were both quite expressive, and there were times when both said much in few words, and effectively!

That it is your first fiction and you did so well with it ~~was~~ reminded me of when I was about 20 and several of us decided to teach an uncle, whose was addicted and limited to poker and pinochle, to play bridge. He drew a perfect hand in hearts and never again played a game of bridge! You should not do as he did, not at all with this beginning. But I was reminded.

Victor's diving under the table reminded me <sup>of</sup> the rapid disappearance into a closet by a Congressman friend of mine in about 1940. He was about to lay the granddaughter of one of the first and best-known suffragettes when there came a knock on the door. So, with my friend in her closet, she laid the man who knocked at the door. Not the same, but I was reminded. I was also reminded of stories I should not tell you.

I hope you are more than just satisfied or honored to have your first in The New Yorker. I hope it encourages you to do more and not to be discouraged <sup>at</sup> that all efforts are not successful. Publishing can be crazy, sometimes editors are, too (as they can also be wonderful), and fine stories sometimes are like Homer begging his bread in all those cities. I am again reminded.

In World War II, about the end of 1942, I was put in touch with the European anti-Hitler underground by The Man Known as Intrepid, the title of the book about <sup>him!</sup> the top British spook then in the US. I wrote a story telling part of what was later known as The Holocaust, with some of my sources papers of the ~~plus~~ Polish underground. All I remember clearly is that it indicated what had started, The Holocaust, and that sometimes Poles did save Jews. I could not place the story. Nobody I could reach cared. Through a friend, and it may have been your father, I gave the story to a tiny Jewish magazine. Where it got little attention except in letters. One was from a New Jersey preacher whose name I think was White. He described it as the most eloquent sermon he'd ever read. I needed money then but that was a failure that was better than money.

It is an odd coincidence, and I'm going back to your girlhood, when you were really in your own way quite expressive, that just before or just after we got the picture of your

two really attractive girls I found something in my desk that reminded me of you then.

As I may have told you some time ago, you created an entire family of strange people, some repugnant and all interesting, and you drew their story. Your mother posted them on the righthand side of the doorway out of the kitchen. We used to enjoy them and discussed them. Once before making a trip to New York I found some paperwound heavy-leaded, I guess close<sup>to</sup> crayoned pencils. So I took them to you for your drawings of your family you invented. Looking through the desk for a very soft pencil there were a couple in the box from which I'd taken them and the ones I gave you home for some nonsecret project I was working on in the OSS. Hard to believe today, but in those days quality pencils were packaged in well-made metal boxes.

OSS also reminds me- did you know your father was in it? And was in both the Army and the Navy? And got into (and out of) some kind of irrational trouble when he corrected a major Navy oversight? Nobody had thought to film the departure of a task force from the Virginia capes area for the invasion of France. Your father, who had a crew with him, had his movie camera and some film in the trunk of his car and he filmed it. I think the trouble was the phony allegation of a security breach. He laughed and laughed about that, as well as all did, because he had trouble in and never entirely succeeded in keeping a Good Humor truck or trucks out of his film. Security?

I was in the Army then, with no duty assigned for four months and home every night with the gas ration I'd wangled. I was in Walter Reed and its <sup>rehab.</sup> rehab and reconditioning sections after a case of the mumps that had been in a private room for a 10 days - in an Army hospital during a war yet - when he and he dustym clay-dirty and so tired crew pulled in. They took turns showing and we sat and talked about that funny business, while Lil potlucked them.

She was busy and had not read your story. She walked in while I was writing the paragraph above. She does not remember it but she ~~remembers~~ remembers a visit when I was not home. He pulled in with a friend she remembers as a <sup>your father</sup> Marine. He had just learned that his first wife, Fran Heflin, had not only left him but had taken with her all they had, his too. He wept on Lil's shoulder, literally. Only time I knew of him crying. (He and her brother who live in suburban Washington remained friends. Not the actor-brother-the lobbyist.)

In your days of that family <sup>art</sup> story you were a good-looking bright girl, a bit on the quiet side, and extraordinarily imaginative. John was the outgoing one.

I hope that if you enjoy fiction you keep it up, but do not be discouraged if something in which you have faith is not accepted by editors. In those days when I spent so much time on Fareway Close I was thoroughly unsuccessful in placing the book I finally published myself. Today it remains the basic book on the <sup>JFK</sup> assassination, respected and used as a college text. With more than 100 international rejections. Your father did place it in England and in Germany but the spooks killed both and a third he was connected with indirectly, by getting a friend to act as my agent in London. But this one looks like your fiction will be accepted.

Up my usual abnormally early hour, my plans for the day changed by the predicted winter storm, I sat and thought about what I'd do with my usual early-morning exercise precluded by the weather. My thoughts kept returning to you and your exceptional success with your first fiction. To that sweet little girl who is now a wife, a mother and finds time to write and to write well. Who in the writing I enjoyed so much earlier is so much her mother's daughter with her interests in nature. Among so many other interests.

Your success with this first fiction and that you thought to let us know about it makes us happy. We appreciate it.

I think your mother's daughter might find a snapshot of herself and her husband. We'll appreciate one.

Please remember us to John and to your mother who would enjoy seeing the nocturnal animals scavenging the feed the birds waste daytime and the squirrels ignoring what is on the ground and climbing the wall of the house to jump over on<sup>to</sup> the feeders and ruin them needlessly.

Thanks again. Our love to you all,

David

After sealing the envelope I was reminded that I did not tell you I'll be on Un-Solved Mysteries March 31 and that on turning on the light over the kitchen door to see whether the new snow presented any hazard to me at 2:55 a.m. I flushed a racoon nosing through the inch of new snow for hidden sunflower seeds. And that reminded me of what may interest your girls.

The TV crew of seven was here for more than six hours this past Friday. All that taping does not indicate the time I'll be used after editing. That is on the King assassination. One of the production staff is a young friend I helped with his master's thesis at Maryland, in communications, on the JFK assassination. He won CINE's Golden Eagle award with his first documentary. (It is available in the stores. It is titled "Reasonable Doubt".)

The racoon just ambled away, as they do not always do with the light. They have learned over the years that we do not menace them. Now if it had been a skunk and it did not leave, I'd have awaited its departure before going out for the papers.

With the days getting longer and more light stimulating the fowl we'll soon have the return of a pair of mallards <sup>annually</sup> that nest with us and prefer the swimming pool outside the kitchen to the pond several hundred feet away because Lil feeds them on the concrete patio of the pool. One dusk late last winter she called me to look. There, eating the ducks' food shoulder to shoulder were a raccoon and a skunk. And while we looked a gray fox came from the woods behind the pool toward the house. When it saw the skunk it stopped, turned around and went back into the woods. It had learned to respect skunks but raccoons, not a menace to skunks, get along well with them. Around here, anyway.

I'll be 80 in six weeks and from limited mobility and the hazard from falling when I live on an anticoagulant I've learned to be careful on leaving the house early mornings. I cannot move rapidly so I also respect the skunks!

As it may interest your girls to know, if they do not already, people and <sup>wild</sup> animals can get along with each other, as animals that are not a mutual threat do, if they want to. I've taken skunks out of the swimming pool without them discharging - but carefully, with with respect for their capability. And this morning's raccoon, who did not run, knew I would not hurt it.

Until an unprecedented deep freeze killed them all, we had bass in the pond so tame they rose to the bank when they heard our voices, with their mouths open for the pieces of bread they knew we'd throw them. And when we farmed I have a flock of hunkers so tame they ate bread from my mouth without biting me. Even brought their young to the house for us to feed them.

The deer frisk around and graze near the house and last week, with the ground covered by snow, one even came to a raised flowerbed under the livingroom window to examine the dead remains, leaving its prints for us to see come daylight. Unless we frighten them they are relaxed around the house during the day and we enjoy watching them.