

THOMAS S. HANDFORTH

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Dear Yannie -

All your Christmas bounty is overwhelming! The big box filled with one thing after another, not least the quinces and the grape (mint peel still my best favorite delicacies, the stationary which means I'd better pull myself together and write to you more often (it is exactly the size and quality which I prefer) - the Chinese recipe book which I had long considered acquiring if I ever became a self-cooker again all in wrappings each of which gave new delight to my optic senses, And now, today, like a period under an exclamation point, comes the box of name-on postcards! It makes me feel like an awful heel for not sending you a \*©\* \*M.D.\* thing! for not having the wits to figure out a single item that you or Stan might really want and for abandoning the thought in despair, while you instinctively know exactly what will please me and take the time and trouble to do so. I surely am a dumb ducky and feel worse than ever about it by having you ignore it.

I was in a sullen mood about Christmas spirit anyway and for some while had resented it creeping up to spring on its helpless victims, now-pursuing the whole institution. In a few years it's possible I'll be like old Uncle Walter - May he rest in peace between platinum sheets! - and out some last years thumbes & dirty Woolworth bargain cards to express my sentiment of the situation, and a bag of peanuts in a lonely moldy garret, my conception of a Christmas feast! Let's hope your bounteous gesture of faith will forestall such a gruesome future! Well at the last minute I did come to my senses

and managed tokens of good will that meant something, for a few folks, but for your case as I said, my wits were unequal to the good will, and so I failed completely.

Actually the Christmas days turned out to involve me in much festive activity. Sunday before Xmas, 18 of Mercedes relatives large & small came for dinner. But for the flu there would have been 25 of them. I ate sparingly of the great bird because, an hour later, I was dining again in town. On Christmas eve we decorated three trees, the Shera tree, one tiny one for a boy in the hospital and one great one at the big house on the lake - Greenwood which Stan may remember as the former Rhoderly. I went to the little church on the Prairie at midnight and <sup>hid himself among</sup> ~~under~~ the clock run out from under the altar and

The next morning, Tim, who in his eleventh year, was discovering bitterly that Christmas rushed upon one all too quickly, was, nevertheless, up hours before the rest of us, gloating over his presents under the tree. To avoid any lull in the day, the Shera's held morning open house (which lasted till 3PM) serving silver pizzas to all comers. Later I ate turkey with the Burkhalters and then moved on to the most lavish annual gathering of the Lakes district - at the Cyrus Happys.

There have been as usual a continuous round of jolly drinking & eating conventions all about the neighborhood before and since the main Day, but I have not gone to many of them, tho on New Years Eve our meanderings among them kept us going until 6 A.M. and I feel as if I couldn't look another party in the face again.

I've been busy doing a number of portrait drawings, for better or for worse, one of them of a little girl in Seattle. My show there at the Museum

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ones on Sunday (Jan 6<sup>th</sup>) and I'll be sending them off soon to Honolulu. Quite a number were sold, which I had hardly expected since I made no effort about it myself, and know very few people over there.

The weather in recent weeks has been at its wettest and darkest which may be one of the causes for my low spirits - tho it doesn't seem to bother the other members of the household very much. All are well and busy as usual. Ned is rapidly growing bigger in all directions which makes Tim appear to be growing smaller by comparison.

I don't know when or how (with or without my jealousy) I'll be getting off to California but it may happen all of a sudden in a few weeks and this letter is getting duller with each line so I had better stop.

Again many thanks to you and Stan and Santa Claus.

Love

Tom

Aria Magazine after completely turning their filing shelves upside down at last found all my missing sketches.