“Note from Marjorie about the letters. This comes first, then the large pages, then the regular letter paper. You must read things chronologically – it’s most important.”

Wednesday, 21 July 1920

Dear old Pal o’mine,

At last I can be mailing this long letter to you. You needn’t take a day off to read it, fearing that it may contain a bomb somewhere in the middle [words redacted]. The letter contains nothing of importance or especial interest and I am registering it only because I fear you will have left Africa before this arrives and I’d like the letter to come back to me not be lost.

This letter has gone on and on for three weeks like a journal because I didn’t want you to know that I was out of work – I thought you might worry a little about me. So I decided to keep the letter until I had a position. Now at last I have some work as you’ll see later on and I can mail this chapter to you at once.

Your nose will be out of joint a little for the next month because I’ll be working long hours and there won’t be much time for writing. When I’m working by day then my evenings have to be spent on housework and various odd jobs.

Pal are you sorry you asked me to write often? I know you didn’t say to write continuously, only often. But dear Boy Blue if you could only know how much I’ve enjoyed this three weeks orgy you would not mind receiving the enclosed bunch of manuscript. Read it at your leisure and just make believe your mail has been piling up for you.

The garden of my thoughts is full of many many winding paths. Most of them are flooded with sunshine and lead to pleasant places, but a few are rocky or swampy not comfortable to tread and not leading to beautiful spots. You and I have ventured down all the paths, even the unpleasant ones, and you know almost as well as I the names of all the flowers growing in the garden. You’re familiar with all the grassy lanes and byways, all the shady nooks of serious thoughts and bubbling springs of laughter, and each and every separate flower of every kind. In the pages you are about to read you will find the record of our wanderings as we went hand in hand through the informal, old fashioned garden of my thoughts. There is only one path longer than the others and more wondrously beautiful with exquisite flowers on either side and stately, eloquent trees forming a leafy archway adown its entire length. The birds in those trees sing more sweetly than in every other part of the garden and a jolly, happy, babbling brook purls along in joyous ecstasy, playing with the sunbeams and murmuring endearments as it kisses the forget-me-nots growing along its banks. For all its beauty, the path has never yet been trod by anyone save myself and it leads – ah, well you would have to find out for yourself where it leads. It is the only path in the garden which you have not trod, yet God made it for you alone and he made it passing fair. Some day Boy Blue will you go exploring with me and discover where the path ends?

Now I’ll say good-bye for a little, while I do down to the river of dreams “which runs quietly down from its hidden home in the forest of sleep, with a measureless motion calm and deep.”

“The river of dreams runs dimly down

By a secret way that no man knows;

But the soul lives on while the river flows

Through the gardens bright and the forests brown;

And I often think that our whole life seems

To be more than half made up of dreams.

The changing sights and the passing shows,

The morning hopes and the midnight fears,

Are left behind with the vanished years;

Onward with ceaseless motion,

The life-stream flows to the ocean,

While we follow the tide, awake or asleep,

Till we see the dawn on Love’s great deep,

And the shadows melt and the soul is free, --

The river of dreams has reached the sea.”

Good-night, Boy Blue, good-night, and may the angels guide you safely on every path you tread.

Marjorie Daw

[Note: The poem Marjorie includes in this letter is an excerpt from Henry Van Dyke’s poem “River of Dreams.” For the complete poem see <https://www.poetrynook.com/poem/river-dreams-0>. For more information about the poet, see https://www.poetrynook.com/poet/henry-van-dyke.]