

January 26, 1806 Cummington

Will my once, my still, dear Charity again with pleasure recognize the hand and welcome the once well known voice of her distant friend? Or have those enemies of friendship, time and distance, erased from her mind every idea of her former friend, and consigned her to silence and oblivion? Tho I may indeed at present be forgotten with "with the years beyond the flood" yet the voice of friendship perhaps may still have power to call forth the dormant passion of the friendly soul, and awaken the sleeping recollection to the remembrance of her whose voice she hears - O my friend is it not Lydia who now addresses you? Is there not still a trace of friendship for her remaining on that heart which once glowed with affection and tenderness? Yes, surely I have a place in that heart, which time will never deprive me of. But why, my dear this silence, this long silence? What uncommon circumstance has so long prevented you writing? Indeed it is so long since you wrote that I can hardly recollect the time. October has ceased to be a favored month nor has it conveyed its favors to January or May. All are now unpropitious, something I fear has befallen you - some uncommon misfortune deprives me of your letters - Do, if possible, favor me with one this winter. I propose to send this to Abington, and think it will reach you before long. If you can write and send to any of my relations in Abington, any time within four or five weeks, it will probably come directly to me. My Mother I hope is now at Abington on a visit and will tarry about four weeks - do visit her for my sake if you can with propriety. My Father is at Boston. I wrote to you last spring by my Father when he went to Boston and he gave the letter to the Representative of Bridgewater, ESQ. Snow, I think. But whether it has reached you or not, I think is doubted because I have has no return - tho it is probable you have received it.-----I am engage in a school this winter in Cummington, am boarding at Capt. Lazelle. You will readily conclude I live not a very agreeable life - but you know we must be doing something - a school, however, is no very agreeable place. And now my dear , what shall I say? What shall I say to a dear long absent friend, whom I have no prospect of ever seeing? I have lately thought much of you, and have almost believed that I should soon meet you, and should soon enjoy a pleasing interview - but "vain are our fancies airy flights" O how gloomy is the idea that we shall never more meet on earth and that these eyes will never more behold each other, till they are in death! Strong as has been our attachment and tenderly as we have loved each other, we have been and still are doomed to pass our lives at a distance from each other, which afford no pleasing prospect or flattering hope of more blissful days --While happier scenes in prospect smiles -- Short is this life, and of little consequence, but to prepare fo a future and endless state beyond the grave. May we not forget that future meeting which we cannot avoid.

Friendship be yours

While life endures

May happiness be your repast

May joys increase

May sorrows cease

Till heaven shall call you home at last.

Believe me still to be your affectionate friend.

Lydia Richards