

A Letter from Lucy Knox to Henry Knox, August 23, 1777

Boston August 23rd 1777 –

My Dearest Friend –

I wrote you a line by the last post just to lett you know I was alive which indeed was all I could then say with propriety for I had serious thoughts that I never should see you again – so much was I reduced by only four days illness but by help of a good constitution I am surprisingly better today —I am now to answer your three last letters in one of which you ask for a history of my life. it is my love so barren of adventures and so replete with repetition that I fear it will afford you little amusement – however such as it is I give it you —In the first place, I rise about eight in the morning (a lazy hour you will say – but the day after that, is full long for a person in my situation) I presently after sitt down to my breakfast, where a page in my book, and a dish of tea, employ me alternately for about an hour – when after seeing that family matters go on right, I repair to my work, my book, or my pen, for the rest of the forenoon – at two oclock I usually take my solitary dinner, where I reflect upon my past happiness when I used to sitt at the window watching for my Harry – and when I saw him coming my heart would leap for joy – when he was all my own and never happy from me when the bare thought of six months absence, would have shocked him – to divert these ideas I place my little Lucy by me at table – but the more engaging her little actions are so much the more do I regret the absence of her father, who would take such delight in them. —in the afternoon I commonly take my chaise, and ride into the country or go to drink tea with one of my few friends. They consist of M^{rs} Jarviss M^{rs} Sears M^{rs} Smith M^{rs} Pollard and my Aunt Waldo – I have many acquaintance beside these whom I visit but not without Ceremony – when with any of the former I often spend the evening – but when I return home – how shall describe my feelings to find myself intirely alone – to reflect that the only friend I have in the world is at such an imense distance from me – to think that he may be sick and I cannot assist him ah poor me my heart is ready to burst, you who know what a trifle would make me unhappy, can conceive what I suffer now. –

when I seriously reflect that I have lost my father Mother Brother and Sisters – intirely lost them – I am half distracted true I chearfully resigned them for one far dearer to me than all of them – but I am totaly deprived of him – I have not seen him for almost six months – and he writes me without pointing out any method by which I may ever expect to see him again – tis hard my Harry indeed it is I love you with the tenderest the purest affection – I would undergo any hardships to be near you and you will not lett me – suppose this campaign should be like the last carried into the winter – do you intend not to see me in all that time – tell me dear what your plan is –

I wrote you that the Hero Sailed while I was at Newburg – She did but has been cruiseing about from harbour to harbour since – to get met – she is now here, and will sail in a day or two for france –

I wish I had fifty guinies to spare to send by her for necessarys – but I have not – the very little gold we have must be reserved for my Love in case he should be taken – for friends in such a case are not too common. – I am more distressed from the hott weather than any other fears – God grant you may not go farther south'ard – if you should I possitively will come too – I believe Gen^l Howe is a paltry fellow – but happy for as that he is so – are you not much pleased with the news from the Northard we think it is a great affair and a confirmation of S^tClairs villainy baseness – I hope he will not go unpunished – we hear also that Gen^l Gates is to go back to his command. – if so Master Schuyler, cannot be guiltless – it is very strange, you never mentioned that affair in any of your letters –

What has become of M^{rs} Greene, do you all live together – or how do you manage – is Billy to remain with you payless or is he to have a commission – if the former I think he had much better remained where he was – if he understood business he might without a capital have made a fortune – people here – without advanceing a shilling frequently clear hundreds in a day – such chaps as Eben Oliver – are all men of fortune – while persons – who have ever lived in affluence – are in danger of want – oh that you had less of the military man about you – you might then after the war have lived at ease all the days of your life – but now I don't know what you will do – your being long acustomed to command – will make you too haughty for mercantile matters – tho I hope you will not consider yourself as commander in chief of your own house – but be convinced tho not in the affair of M^r Coudre that there is such a thing as equal command – I send this by Cap^t Randal who says he expects to remain with you – pray how many of these lads have have you – I am sure they must be very expensive – I am in want of some square dollars – which I expect from you to by me a peace of linen an article I can do no longer without haveing had no recruit of that kind for almost five years – girls in general when they marry are well stocked with those things but poor I had no such advantage –

little Lucy who is without exception the sweetest child in the world – sends you a kiss but where shall I take it from say you – from the paper I hope – but dare I say I sometimes fear that a long absence the force of bad example may lead you to forget me at sometimes – to know that it ever gave you pleasure to be in company with the finest woman in the world, would be worse than death to me – but it is not so, my Harry is too just too delicate too sincere – and too fond of his Lucy to admit the most remote thought of that distracting kind – away with it – don't be angry with me my Love – I am not jealous of your affection – I love you with a love as true and sacred as ever entered the human heart – but from a diffidence of my own merit I sometimes fear you will Love me less – after being so long from me – if you should may my life end before I know it – that I may die thinking you wholly mine –

Adieu my love

LK

Source: Lucy Flucker Knox to Henry Knox, August 23, 1777, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC02437.00638.