

2739 Macomb Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
January 13, 1949

Dear Hilda van Stockum,

Catherine Coblentz has often shared with me your happy exploits and esoteric conclusions. "A letter from Hilda" always sets her up and promises some profitable gem of example for me to suck on while I wash dishes.

Today your letter with the sad news of your partial loss prompts me to write. And, may I venture to agree that what is lost to heaven can hardly be considered an out and out deprivation to you. But, if it happened to me, I know I should feel all hollow..and nothing but sadness.

My littlest lamb received your angels! Alphabet for Christmas. Donnie recognized the appropriateness of the gift, for we think of Little M. as hardly <sup>one</sup> removed from an angel, herself. We delight in the appealing drawing above your autograph; we're sure Little M. would ~~look like~~ that, were her/wings visible.  
small

Donnie's favorite poem is still "Baalam's Ass". And it has already been an important one in our family. Tilford, (my not-particularly-"spiritual" husband) had just listened to an account of a woman's good deed. Mrs. Coblentz who had told me the story, and I, saw in her dramatic act the moving Hand of God. Tilford, even after this high light was pointed out to him, refused to believe (on grounds of trivia). So I said he was as bad as Baalam. To which he replied, at least I hadn't called him Baalam's ass. At which, I was able to hand him your poem... Possibly he hid his shameful admission behind an expression of genuine admiration for your fine verse. I think this particular poem will serve many purposes.

Donnie, who is still puffed up with the mumps, and I, have just looked again at the pictures and read some of the poems. She is especially fond of all the very powerful looking angels like St. Michael and the three who are talking almost haughtily about God's love. I fancy she mentions her fondness for God's page and the girl with the yoke because it is so easy for her to identify herself with them. We are both awed by the Word of God, "a whisper in the straw". I, for one, could never speak these lines.

I am glad to hear that your mother has gained in health. We remember her well and still play the recording

She says the falling angel was bad so "the light was taken from his sword" —

of the story of "Smidchen" (?)

I hope that things become easier for you now that you have removed to Montreal. It is obvious that you make good use of your adversity; resolving plots out of noise and chaos, and changing trouble to amusement by your alchemy of humour. (Your miracles are put to further use by shaming to renewed effort those who complain about small problems). However, just for the pleasant balance of simple justice, it would be rather nice if everything went well with you for a change.

Always my admiration -  
and good wishes,

Martha Dudley