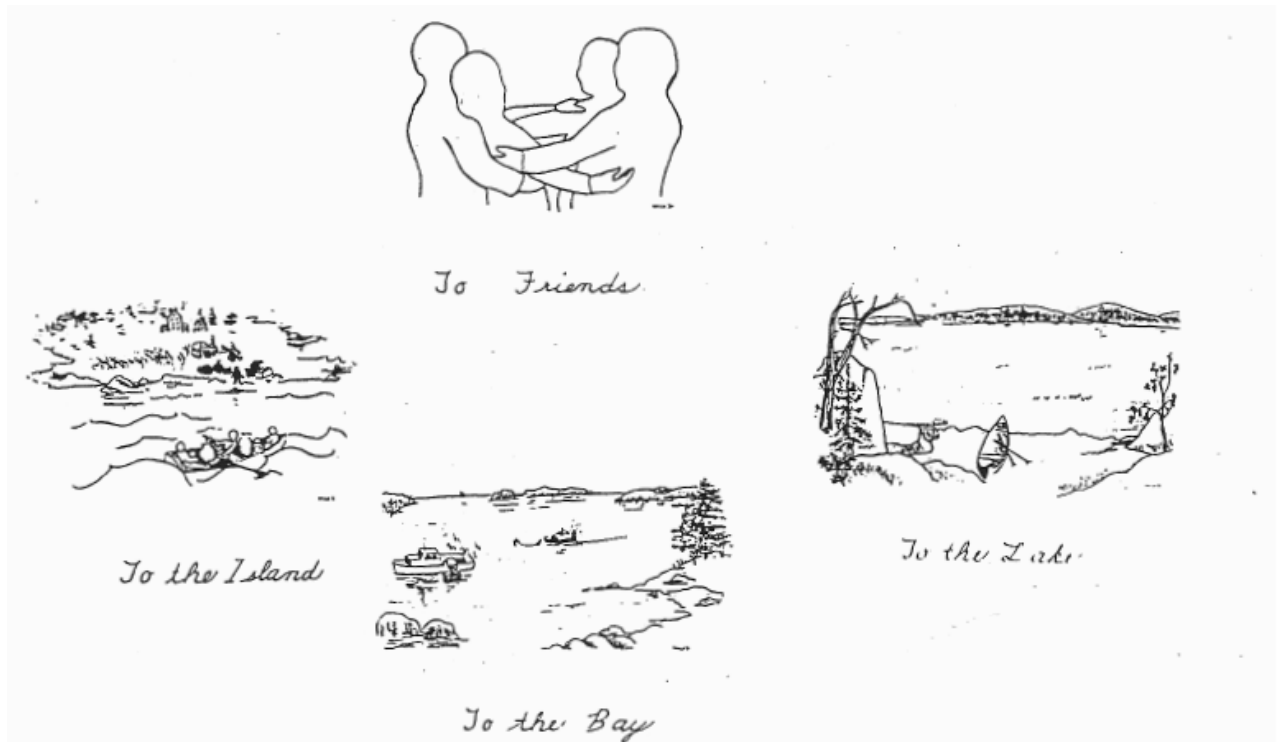


COMING HOME

Poetry and Illustrations



By

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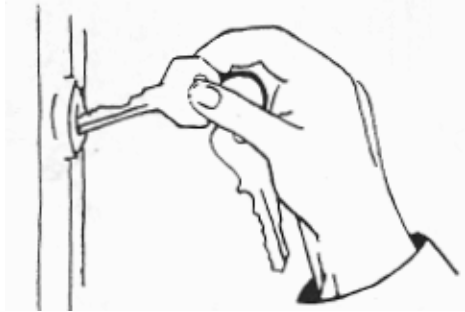


Coming home to you, dear friends
Becomes more precious with each passing year.
Your warm embrace, your knowing smile,
The memories we share reclaim the past.
Thank God you're here!
Thank God there's yet more time
To bring together little joys and sorrows and concerns,
Enlarging meaning to the special kinship that we share.



To the Woods

We're here! We have returned.
How wonderful to sense the continuity
Of passing years and days to come.
We revel in the timeless beauty
Of this place we've loved so long. The fragrance in the air,
Familiar sights and sounds of chipmunks and chickadees
In constant patterns of activity.
Familiar spruce— we note their growth,
Remembering when some were planted.
Then there are those we've always known
That reach into the ages past
Beyond our reckoning.

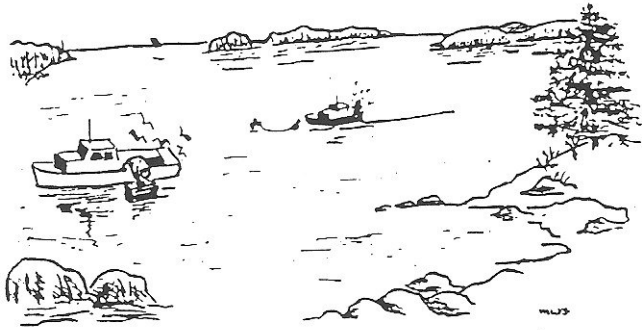


To the Camp

We put a key into the lock.
Familiar sounds of opening, and here
Before us are those furnishings we know——
A rocking chair, that table that was always there,
That rug that bears the evidence
Of pets and children's playfulness.
We greet the pictures on the wall.
We're here! We have returned.
We revel in the memories this place imparts
And don its mantel of security and peace.



We hasten down the soft woods path
To greet our tiny beach and ancient
Boulders that we know.
For generations
This has been a, special place apart
Where we could find our equanimity,
Where we could watch the crystal water
Lap the shore and marvel at its purity.
We scan far reaches of the lake
And note familiar hills and mountains
Shaping the horizon that we love.
We note sand beaches where we've taken our canoe
And cooked our breakfast on the rocks,
Luxuriating in our sunlit privacy.
We listen for the yodeling of loons
And never fail to marvel at their eerie cry.
We greet you, loons and mountains, rocks and water.
We celebrate your timeless beauty and your peace.



To The Bay

We make our way down rough and pitted roads
To find our haven on the Bay.
We fill our lungs with fragrance of salt air,
Of clam and mussel flats, of seaweed
On the rocks. We watch the ever-changing
Tides, emerging dulce covered boulders
Resembling herds of grazing buffalo
In shining fields of mud and sand.
The great blue heron watches regally
As gulls and cormorants join in
Eternal quest for nourishment.
Their welcome chatter mingles with the hum
Of lobster boats and chatter of the lobsterer.
Who move among their buoys to pull their traps.
Cool banks of fog approach and lower
Misty curtains over islands in the bay,
And somber gray replaces gold and sparkling blue.
We're here! We have returned.
We revel in the magic of this world.
And don its mantel of security and peace.



On rolling surf the lobster boat
Plows through the rain and fog past reefs
Where seals and cormorants stake out their claim.
Bell buoys clang in distant mist
And warn of rocky hazards on our way.
We search the gray horizon when
The ghostlike contour of
Our island takes its promised shape.
We loose the skiff and clamber clumsily aboard
And stow our gear to row the final hitch to shore.
“We’re here! We have returned!,” we shout.
Familiar wet and grassy paths
With berry laden bushes, dripping ferns,
And ancient spruces lead us to
The great old house, nostalgic
Gathering place for generations past.
This is the home of stories by the fire,
Of table games of cards and puzzles,
Of soups and stews, of breads and cakes,
Of favorite rooms and sagging beds
And old initials carved and dated on the walls.
We gather on the great veranda
And note familiar spruces, distant islands –
The timeless scene that we
And generations past have loved so well.
We listen to the sounds of waves’
Incessant pounding on the shore.
We saunter over fields of lacy moss,
Of cranberries and grasses once the food of sheep.
We savor sweet red raspberries

And gather kelp and dulce from retreating tides.
We watch the gulls and terns dive deep
For fish and clams, then rise to soar
Above with bounty for their young.
And there's the osprey wheeling high
To ancient nests of branches, twigs, and mud
Built into tops of spruces,
Where squealing young raise open beaks
Awaiting fish their parents bring.
We clamber over rocks to find
The lighthouse, guardian in the past,
That warned the ships at sea of hidden reefs.
We mount the steps and gaze in wonder.
Infinity of sea and earthly beauty
Wraps us in its mystic spell.



Returning to the village where
We go, not just to get the mail,
But also to revisit pleasant
Streets still lined with houses great
And small whose occupants we knew,
Both family and friends. We note
The stores where we would buy our groceries
And hear the pleasant chatter of the town.
There stands the blacksmith's shop where we
Could watch the red hot metal hammered
Into shapes by strong and blackened arms.
The depot where the train came in
Is quiet now. Not so the church
Where congregations meet to worship,
Where births and deaths are noted, and
Church suppers are put on in summertime,
And we with young and old alike partake.
We eat our fill and go our way
Along the sparkling Narraguagus where
The waters tumble over glistening rocks,
And salmon run, and children play.
We miss the handsome covered bridge that was
A landmark of the town.
Gone is the ice cream parlor and
The bandstand we recall. But memories
Linger on and take us home again.



Epilogue

Coming home to friends, to woods,
To lake and camp, to bay and island,
And to the village we have known
Is coming back to purest gentleness,
Uncomplicated love encompassing
Our past and future dreams.
The warm embrace of friends in greeting,
The dappled, sunlit forest path,
The yodeling of loons upon the lake,
The welcome shelter of the camp,
Familiar places in the village,
Great open vistas on the bay,
And fragrant island spruce and mosses –
Here we find the inspiration
That sustains us. Here the healing
Beauty, peace, and love, the memories
To which we joyously return