

RHODA BARNES to MILTON BARNES

"Our Home" March 7th /65

My darling

Here I am seated by the western window of our room - overlooking the delightful prospect presented by Neelands - Suitts - Theakers &c &c - Tis rather a nice day - slightly fitful as March is wont to be - sunshine and shadow alternating in quiet succession - twould be a very hope inspiring spring-day [sic] if it were not for so many sad circumstances surrounding us -

I wont attempt to give you the particulars in detail of John Cook[']s Murder - Dr Stewart will be prepared to do that. for my part I have heard it all repeated all over by so many different persons & their own particular emotions when they first heard it that I am perfectly heart sick of the sad awful tale of guilt and sorrow. We heard the report of the pistol but never thought of a deed so dreadful being perpetrated in our midst - every body was so horrified & excited that there was but little sound sleep that night[,] I am sure[.] I was awake every hour & my sleep was troubled with dreams.

Today I heard the gate open & looking out saw a man in soldier[']s clothes - I felt "kind a fraid" to go to [the] door, [but] he came in - told us his name was Jordan from the 97th - said he ^[had] been sick - I did'nt feel comfortable all the time & was glad [when] he was gone - when we were talking about the murder, he said there would be a good deal of such work, when the war was over - officers who had been so cruel[,] proud & hateful to their men would be apt to meet with the same fate - I wish he had'nt come here talking in such a way at this time - I have no reason to believe that he or any one else has any spite against you - I've never

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"Our Home" March 7th /65

- 2 -

heard any intimation that you were anything else than kind to those over whom you are placed - yet it made [me] feel uneasy & miserable - but then you know our minds are unusually excited at this time - [I] hope it will wear off however - & that no harm will come of it - It is between 2 & 3 o'clock [and] Mother has gone to the funeral - the Masons are to officiate - & I dislike their performance [-] I wish you were at home to cheer me up & reassure me - then I could nestle up into your great strong arms, and at least imagine myself so secure, so safe - then I could sleep so soundly - & never once ~~be~~ [sic] popping up ^[my] head to see if some dark shadow was'n't prowling into our room - Oh would'nt it be nice[?] - no - for then if you were hear [sic] now, I'd be fearing that some fiend[-]prompted home rebel would be lurking round our great happy home nest to rob me of my loved one - My protector - but why do we forget to trust in the God who alone is able to protect & preserve us in all such times. Let us try to have faith to trust ourselves so entirely into his care & keeping that it will drive away all this slavish fear - He is able, he is willing. Let us doubt no more - My darling[.]

The evening last week that I mailed your letter I got a nice good one for [sic] you and one from little "Sade", - you spoke of having written a good long one a few days before - that one I've not gotten yet, hope I may - for in it I 'spose you tell me about Charlie[']s arrival & how you like your new shirt - Saturday evening I went down to the office & lo I got another nice little letter ^[dated February 15] - & enclosed [was] a very dainty little one for our darling - to say she was pleased would'nt half express the ecstasy [sic] of that [?] pet. I read it over twice for her - then she'd take it and read what she could remember of it & the idea of the Chaplain giving the paper she thought was very funny. I shall take care of it for her -

Rhoda Barnes to Milton Barnes
"Our Home" March 7th /65

- 3 -

t'will be a nice keepsake a memento of her infant days - & of Pa's love for his little Swan - wont it love? - I used to think I'd be selfish enough to envy my child of [sic] the love lavished upon it by my husband - Ah how little I knew of it then - it seems to tighten the link than [sic] binds our hearts into one - I love thee all the more for it my loved one - because I know it makes thy love for me not one whit the less - Do you remember in those dear old times now long ago - how when we were prospecting - you told me in soft low tones - "I'd kiss the child & then its Mother" - I hardly thought then how fully I should realize it all - But we'll talk of all these things by & by wont we? you old dark-eyed scamp you -

Since I commenced writing - Bell brought me a letter from the office from Meliss - she is attending a Boarding School in Zanesville - one of the Sister's kind - St Columba - tis an odd idea [-] I cannot understand it - why she is taking her money - & going to such a school - if she ever intends to marry Capt^[sic] Jim - I think she has as much education & accomplishment as he can appreciate - Jim talks of going to Idahoe [sic] & staying one year perhaps [-] then they are to be married - hope so anyway -

Sadie wrote to me that your folks had sold the farm - & were talking of selling their town house & buying Lyle's farm - they got \$6000 - I dont know who bought it -

Ruth was out among the Neptunes - Clark [Barnes] in Wheeling in [the] Hospital & Jimmy [Barnes] in Washington City - Frank [Barnes] in Baltimore.

Charlie came up [on the] Sabbath - read me his letters of commendation - and praised you - so much for your kindness to him - he has'nt^[brought] up ~~those~~ those

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"Our Home" March 7th /65

- 4 -

things yet & I am so crazy to see them -- I got the letter from Jim[']s
Mother - I spose he was pleased, but he said but little - his brother
came last night to see him - he is so ragged - I tell you he has has [sic?]
been fixed like Jim - I think we'll try and get some family to take
Jim, if possible - it is almost dark I must take this down for Dr
Stewart to take - Dont send any stray soldiers here, I am afraid of them -
Your loving wife Rhoda
Love from all your own -