

San Francisco, 1867. I will write an account of our time, for it's the only way I'll make sense of it now. You are written through me, like a stick of rock. Did you ever see rock? I haven't seen it here. It's an English seaside thing, a stick of hard sugar candy with words written all the way through. Like you're written through me.

When you see this plain black leather book with my girl's scrawl inside, I imagine your fingers trailing over it, incurious. I know what you thought of books. But you'll remember this one: this inherited notebook for a new bride, with its scraps of advice and blank pages for my own observations. I hid it when they took me away, the only thing of ours I was able to save.

To write this will take time. One day, I will bring it back to you. By then I'll know what really happened. Who you were. How you made me who I am.

And don't you forget, I'm busy too. For all your larks and bluebirds and wild horses up there, I have a wedding and dresses and visitors. As if nothing ever happened. Nothing at all.

But it did happen. Do you remember the day of the massacre? And when the Indians came home with us after the scout? I remember. And I remember the way you looked when you talked about war, and railways, and my family. And the way you looked out at the view. And at me. That I remember, most of all. I remember it as hard as I can as they lace me back into the cage from which you set me free.