



# DEAR AMERICA

*The Diary of  
Catharine Carey Logan*



*Standing in the Light*

MARY POPE OSBORNE

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# For my mother



While the events described and some of the characters in this book may be based on actual historical events and real people, Catharine Carey Logan is a fictional character, created by the author, and her diary and its epilogue are works of fiction.

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*Delaware Valley,  
Pennsylvania*



*1763*

*13th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Today Papa gave Thomas and me new copybooks, black-walnut ink, and quills. I shall use mine for a diary, as well as for schoolwork.

The house is still. I write in the loft by candle-light while Thomas and Eliza sleep near me.

Papa is snoring downstairs. Mother sings softly in the dark to Baby Will. He suffers from his first tooth.

Mother shed a tear of joy when she discovered this tooth, for her last two babies did not live long enough to have one. She always worries about Baby Will. Weeks ago he was just skin and bone after a bout of fever and diarrhea. But lately she says again and again: "My, Baby Will has grown fatter, dost thee not all agree?"

We start school again tomorrow after helping bring in the harvest. I am so excited I can barely sleep. I confess I am looking forward to seeing Jess Owen. I have many things to tell him.



*14th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

All in the girls' school were talking about Jess Owen today. He has returned to the boys' school next door after spending six months away in Philadelphia. He has grown much taller and appears to be the most handsome boy in the valley.

Last winter, Jess and I were good friends. I talked easily to him and teased him. But today I was shocked to learn that I felt exceedingly shy when I first saw him on the path through the sugar maple grove.

He waved to me and called my name. The sun was bright on the maples, and a gentle breeze blew, making the last leaves fall around him like yellow stars.

I only nodded in return, then walked more quickly, for I was in a flutter.

When Thomas asked why I was walking so fast, I hushed him. In truth, I suddenly did not know what I would say if Jess were to walk with us.

I am confused now about my attack of fear. I pray I will soon find my tongue.

*15th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Weather unusually warm. Papa burned trees yesterday, and the air is still sweet with the smell of burnt wood.

Before school, Thomas and I caught the pigs eating pumpkins and we chased them with sticks. When Thomas struck one, Mother saw him and severely told him to exert himself with more loving-kindness.

Thomas protested, for he is seven years old and does not like to have his will crossed.

Mother told him to watch his impudent tongue. She said that God loves all His creatures, however humble.

“Even naughty pigs?” Thomas asked with his usual mischievous grin.

“Yes, and even naughty boys,” Mother said.

If God loves all His creatures, I pray He will have mercy on *me* and untie my tongue.

*16th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Unpleasant news from Master Collins today: Soon Lucy, Molly, and I must learn how to divide

the long numbers. I fear I shall never understand and shall be afraid even to ask questions. I pray to be more courageous both in matters concerning arithmetic and talking to boys such as Jess Owen.

*17th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Monthly Meeting today. The Friends disowned Sarah Thompson for dancing and singing, John Palmer for buying a slave, Ezekiel Carter for enlisting in the army, Liza Bennet for deviating from plainness of dress, Rebecca Merrick for marrying one not of our religious society, and Elizabeth Knowlton for having a vain and airy manner. Christopher Betts acknowledged it was shameful for him to ride in a horse race and to play cards.

Then, in the silence, I found myself thinking about Jess Owen waving at me in the grove. What has happened to the girl I was last year? The spirited girl who spoke to Jess so easily? Was she too bold? Was her manner too vain and airy? Would the Friends eventually turn out that girl? I fear

she was not very modest and courteous, as the Quakers require a young woman to be. Sometimes alone in the woods, she even danced and sang!

But I confess I miss her. She was a happy creature.

*18th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Before Jess Owen left the schoolyard today, his eyes seemed to seek me out. Then he waved and called my name.

Molly and Lucy both saw his action. Molly marveled that Jess Owen had called to me—and that I was red in the face.

Her words frighten me. I feel that my face betrayed me—revealing my strong feelings for Jess! I must find a way to hide myself so no one can guess what I think or feel.

*19th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Mother boiled potatoes tonight. We mashed them with milk and butter, then cooked them in the skillet and served them with honey. A better pancake dinner was never had. The whole family



cheerful and thankful, except me. I was in an inexplicably gloomy mood. Mother scolded me for looking cross.

But then Papa invited me to go out into the night with him and look through his spyglass at the stars. They are so plentiful tonight, they moved Papa to quote Scripture: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars, each Thou hast ordained. What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"

I wish I had the courage to talk to Jess Owen about Papa's spyglass. But I worry now that whatever I say will sound too vain or too airy. I think I should say only simple things: "How was thy time in Philadelphia, Jess? How dost thee like returning to our school?"

*21st of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Anxious day. Stayed home, as Baby Will is unwell. He had a fever and diarrhea again, so severe that Papa left off farming and went for Doctor Griffith.

By noon the doctor arrived and diagnosed

that Baby Will has worms. He fed him rhubarb and pinkroot. Finally the baby slept peacefully in Mother's arms.

For the rest of the day, I tended to Eliza and the cooking, sweeping, feeding livestock, and collecting eggs.

Dear God, please keep Baby Will under Thy wing.

*22<sup>nd</sup> of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Plain and simple day.

Thomas and I stayed home to help Mother again. Baby Will seems to be conquering his worms. Mother, in a cheerful mood, made stewed apples and sweet biscuits for breakfast.

It was gray and windy as Thomas and I carried six buckets each from the spring and Eliza collected kindling. We filled the great iron pot over the fire and heated the water, then scrubbed a week's worth of dirty clothes. While we worked, I made Thomas recite his multiplication tables and spelling words.

Later I gave Eliza a quilting lesson while

Thomas practiced his penmanship. He can write with a joining hand and make capitals now.

In the afternoon Mother made candles while I took Eliza and Thomas into the forest to gather nuts. Thomas tore his britches climbing a tree in quest of a bird's nest and Eliza cried because her stomach was hurting. I fear she might have worms, too.

Though she is four years old, she is quite small, so I was able to carry her all the way home. Mother gave her rhubarb and pinkroot. Then I baked johnnycakes and boiled turnips for Thomas and Papa.

*23rd of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Papa was gone all day, comforting the Lancasters who have recently lost two children to whooping cough.

When he returned, we had devotions and prayed for the souls of the children. Then Papa showed us tiny wildflowers he had found on his journey. Somehow they have survived all the early frosts.

Thomas asked Papa why he bothered with such tiny things.

Papa said that we must study *all* the things of our world because no matter how small, each wears the mark of our Maker.

This thought gives new meaning to the owl that hoots in the dark, my leaping candle flame, the whispery breathing sounds of Baby Will downstairs.

Perhaps God hoots. God leaps. And God breathes downstairs.

*These* are the thoughts I should like to share with Jess Owen.

*24th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Eliza seems better. Mama even allowed her to go with all of us to the Meeting House.

As we sat in silence, ill-behaved boys in the gallery laughed once during worship. I fear I heard the laughter of Jess Owen among them.

After Meeting, Mother called them “impudent children,” loud enough for them to hear. (Oh, how mistaken to call *Jess* a child!)

Mother keeps a list for her children on how to behave at Meeting. I know it by heart:

No talking, laughing, biting nails, pinching neighbors, stretching, yawning, spitting, staring at others, tapping of feet, or sighs of impatience.

Often it seems impossible to sit for two hours without succumbing to at least one of these temptations.

When I walked by Jess on the way to our carriage, he smiled at me—in front of all!

I looked away, blushing red in the face.

Mother might say that he has a wild character because he plays pinch-penny and laughs in Meeting. 'Tis strange that I do not care. I fear that in my deepest heart, I am a bit of a wild creature myself.

*26th of Eleventh Month, 1763*

Great distress. Jess Owen caught up with me on the path to school and, in the most

beguiling voice, asked me if I liked blue ribbons.

I asked him why he wanted to know, and he answered that he thought I would look very pretty with blue ribbons in my hair.

I prayed for composure . . . and all I received was this inspiration: "Watch thy impudent tongue, Jess Owen."

What a *horrible* thing to say! It sounds like what Mother would say! I could die a thousand deaths for having spoken thus!

Jess smiled a bit of a smirk and walked away. I wished I could walk away from myself as well.

So I would say this was a most miserable day. My face grows hot just to remember my words.

*27th of Eleventh Month, 1753*

I was relieved to stay home today and help Mother, for I did not have to face Jess Owen. However, I am sad that Eliza is unwell again. Her stomachache came back before dawn, so all morning Mother rocked her while I tended Baby Will.

When Papa came in from working in the fields, he fetched Doctor Griffith, who treated Eliza

with red bark. Soon she slept soundly and without pain.

I fear Mother and I were greatly alarmed by news the doctor brought. He reported that Indians have raided three farmhouses on the river. Mother clutched me and, nearly in tears, exclaimed, "What terrible news!" She is very frightened of the Indians. I fear I could offer her little comfort, for my own heart was beating with fear.

Papa spoke to her in a calm, soft voice saying that we should put our trust in God. I wanted to believe him, but when he saw the doctor out to his carriage, I rushed after him. I waited until the doctor had driven away, then said, "What dost thee truly think about the Indian attack?"

"I expected as much," he answered.

He stopped to sit on a log and motioned for me to sit with him. He explained that our government had lied to the Indians and broken all its treaties with them. Now the English were refusing to leave the Indian territories, even though our war with the French has ended.