

GIVE THANKS

Give Thanks



A THANKSGIVING
COMPANION



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Letters from an American Farmer (excerpt)

Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crevecoeur (1735–1813)

What then is the American, this new man?

I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater.

Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. . . . The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas and form new opinions. . . .

This is an American.

The First Thanksgiving

(excerpt)

Edward Winslow (1595–1655)

Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling that so we might after a more special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruits of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl, as with a little help beside, served the company almost a week, at which time amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and amongst the rest their greatest King Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the Plantation and bestowed on our governor and upon the captain and others.

And although it be not always so plentiful, as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want, that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.



I Hear America Singing

Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be
 blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves
 off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the
 deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter
 singing as he stands,
The woodcutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the
 morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife
 and work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of
 young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

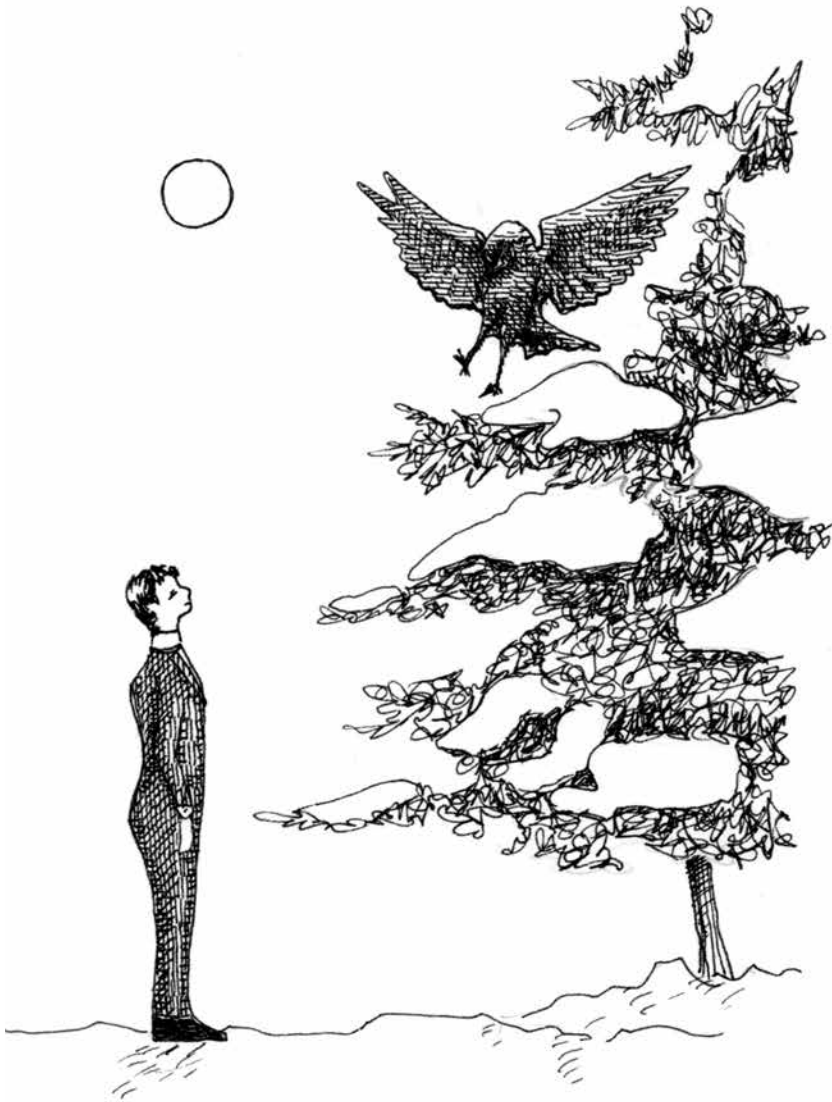


Dust of Snow

Robert Frost (1874–1963)

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.



An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving

Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888)

Sixty years ago, up among the New Hampshire hills, lived Farmer Bassett, with a houseful of sturdy sons and daughters growing up about him. They were poor in money, but rich in land and love, for the wide acres of wood, corn, and pasture land fed, warmed, and clothed the flock, while mutual patience, affection, and courage made the old farmhouse a very happy home.

November had come; the crops were in, and barn, buttery, and bin were overflowing with the harvest that rewarded the summer's hard work. The big kitchen was a jolly place just now, for in the great fireplace roared a cheerful fire; on the walls hung garlands of dried apples, onions, and corn; up aloft from the beams shone crook-necked squashes, juicy hams, and dried venison—for in those days deer still haunted the deep forests, and hunters flourished. Savory smells were in the air; on the crane hung steaming kettles, and down among the red embers copper saucepans simmered, all suggestive of some approaching feast.

A white-headed baby lay in the old blue cradle that had rocked six other babies, now and then lifting his head to look out, like a round, full moon, then subsided to kick and crow contentedly, and suck the rosy apple he had no teeth to bite. Two small boys sat on the wooden settle shelling corn for popping, and picking out the biggest nuts from the goodly store their own hands had gathered in October. Four young girls stood at the long dresser, busily chopping meat, pounding spice, and slicing apples; and the tongues of Tilly, Prue, Roxy, and Rhody went as fast as their hands. Farmer Bassett, and Eph, the oldest boy, were “chorin’ round” outside, for Thanksgiving was at hand, and all must be in order for that time-honored day.

