

She would be worried about me. I spent the nickel remaining from my thirty cents for a picture postal card.

After wandering around the station for a while I got up nerve enough to ask the night clerk where a fellow could find a warm place to sleep. He looked around to see if any one was within hearing distance. Then he said, "Go around to the north side, and you'll find a man-hole. Lift the cover, let yourself down until you touch some pipes, then put the cover back on. Don't let anyone see you and don't tell anyone how you found out about this. Here's some matches; after you get the cover on, light one and look around. There's a level place back under the station. It'll be nice and warm back there." I thanked him and slipped around to the north side of the building. After the cover was safely down I lighted a match. The place was filled with pipes, but there was a level stretch farther back.

Later I dozed off thinking of how glad Aunt Iva would be to get my post card.

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## Dearest Mom

*Halcyon Heline*

H. Ec. So.

**D**EAREST Mom, The yellow roses were to have been delivered today at ten. Did they come?

Nancy died exactly 365 days ago.

And it hasn't been a good day for me. I'd look at people who couldn't begin to guess what I'd be thinking about and wonder if maybe some of them had had something awful happen to them to make them terribly sad. Was your day just about endless too? I wondered, and thought about you lots.

Nancy would have been nine now. For all the ten years difference in our ages, could we have been closer?

It's 11:30 p. m. and it is beautiful out. There isn't a moon, but it is so light that sharp shadows are silhouetted on the snow; and it's unbelievably quiet. The fluffy snowflakes coming down slowly emphasize a stillness I've never noticed here in the country before. It's warm, too. I let my coat hang open so my throat would get as wet as my face and hair. The snow is sticky and just about deep enough to make a big, fat snowman. I went for a

long walk all by myself after dinner. Really it was wonderful. I can't decide whether I still prefer this country quiet to city din. At first it made me feel good way down deep, and it did teach me to appreciate little sounds I'd like to have Nancy notice. She'd chuckle if she could hear a frog croak. Remember her double chin when she would laugh low and bubbly?

**DO** YOU still talk to her before you go to sleep? Just as if she were living pretty much the same only in a little better and happier environment? I do.

Usually I go along, outwardly, as I always did. I don't think I have a sad look in my eyes very often, unless something abruptly reminds me of her or something she has done, or something she would like.

A year ago I was a pretty flip kid, wasn't I, mom? And lately we haven't mentioned her so very much in our letters. Would you rather we didn't, maybe? How long do you suppose her braids would be now? And would her hair be golden or would it be the dirty color I was afraid it would turn? Oh, I'm so tired. I have been for over a week. Do you imagine everything gets tired, like trees of standing, and tides of coming in, and do you suppose the moon gets tired of being here so regularly and the winter gets tired of snowing? I clipped an apt poem about tiredness the other day for my scrapbook.

**I**T'S nice driving these six miles alone into the city everyday, but I don't like my work very much. I still hate routine.

I'll write a more comprehensive letter tomorrow, Mom. One that isn't quite so mixed up. I'm pretty moody tonight. I put off thinking all day until after dinner, and then things started to go round and round inside my head.

I wish I could have been with you today. Will you write to me soon? I'd like to talk to you so much, but your letters are the next best things. Especially since you write such nice ones. You see, I get confused most easily. Are nineteen-year-old girls supposed to? I don't feel as old now as I did when I was fifteen. Then, at least, I was positive about a few things. Now, my ideas are so sketchy and uncertain and contradictory. But I do love you, Mom.

Janie

P.S. Outside it is still snowing, quietly.