

Text 14

(“Ah, Jane. My tragedy is that I've read all her books so often I have them memorised”), and other admired authors : Thoreau, Willa Cather, Dickens, Lewis Carroll, Agatha Christie, Raymond Chandler, Hawthorne, Chekhov, De Maupassant - she was a woman with a good and varied mind; intelligence illuminated hazel eyes like the small lamp
5 shining on the table beside her. We talked about the hard Connecticut winters, politicians, far places (“I've never been abroad, but if ever I'd had the chance, the place I would have gone is Africa. Sometimes I've dreamed of it, the green hills, the heat, the beautiful giraffes, the elephants walking about”), religion (“Of course, I was raised a Catholic, but now, I'm also sorry to say, I have an open mind. Too much reading,
10 perhaps”), gardening (“I grow and can all my own vegetables; a necessity”). At last : 'Forgive my babbling on. You have no idea how much pleasure it gives me. But it's way past your bedtime. I know it is mine.”

She escorted me upstairs, and after I was comfortably arranged in a double bed under a blissful load of pretty scrap-quilts, she returned to wish me good night, sweet dreams. I
15 lay awake thinking about it. What an exceptional experience - to be an old woman living alone her in the wilderness and have a stranger knock on your door in the middle of the night and not only open it but warmly welcome him inside and offer him shelter. If our situations had been reversed, I doubt that I would have had the courage, to say nothing of generosity.

20 The next morning she gave me breakfast in her kitchen. Coffee and hot oatmeal with sugar and tinned cream, but I was hungry and it tasted great. The kitchen was shabbier than the rest of the house; the stove, a rattling refrigerator, everything seemed on the edge of expiring. All except one large, somewhat modern object, a deep-freeze that fitted into a corner of the room.

25 She was chatting on : “I love birds. I feel so guilty about not tossing them crumbs during the winter. But I can't have them gathering around the house. Because of the cats. Do you care for cats ?”

Truman Capote - A short Story- A Lamp in a Window