AN ADVENTURE IN IMPROBABILITY

High in the foothills near a cool blue lake where grass nest and Pintails flock for solitude; where rice and goldenrod and snapdragons and thick-bladed marsh grass grow profusely, I have a cabin. A home that would inspire a patriotic sort of longing or an awe of nature in the hearts of a hundred million people.

Mighty cedar logs and puddled clay mortar form the walls; rough hewn slabs and shingles, the roof, parts of which are covered with moss and even struggling violets.

A door, on squeaky hinges and without a latch, admits us to a single room with a squat, old-fashioned stove and a fireplace where a thin, lazy curl of smoke rises from the ashes and slowly floats upward, evidence of a chilly morning.

A hand-crocheted rug, a winter diversion, occupies the center of the room. The only evidence of 20th-century furniture is a large easy chair. Over in the sunny corner a typewriter and filing cabinet and rows of books give away my secret.

A great Dane arises from the rear of the stove and comes yawning and stretching to my side--my other companion.

Near the foot of the headwall a bubble of water trickles down the few mossy rocks and hurries to the lake through the deep needle-strown earth. Here in the summer I read the books Uncle Sam's man leaves in the village upon my order. Here I am contented for months.

But, now as I lie here by the stream, I think of people I have known, of places I have been, of the city especially--how it looks after a year's absence. As I reminisce, my heart seems to grow within me, my head heavy; frankly, I am lonely.

So I pack and leave for the city.

"A nice day isn't it?" as the Conductor takes my ticket--
"Yes, Suh, it is, Suh," and nothing more.

The weather is the sole topic of conversation. Are men so occupied or am I so odd that my conversation, my companionship is unneeded, unwanted? Is everyone self-centered?

I bought magazines, one at a time, for diversion.

In the city a courteous cabbie whisks me to a hotel where I engage an extravagant suite. Have I not lived in a log cabin for a year? A courteous boy accepts my tip and is gone.

The sounds outside are harsh, irritating; the horizon, hazy; the air smells cool and washed, like clothes fresh on a line.

After thorough refreshment in the tub—sopping water on my neck trying desperately to cleanse my back, which ended by my lying down in the tub (I laughed as I compared it to the lake back home)—I searched a phonograph book for a few names I had known. Hundreds of names were alike, taking strength in numbers.

Somed I could not find, some were not at home. Men who are my friends have no bonds to bind them. Travel gives color, character, cross-section. Why suffer in a city when nature abounds with life and easy living?

Out on the street a mob of men madly made much of every chance for hastening yonder.

I spied a man loitering against a building and hastened casually to make acquaintance, but he darted a questioning glance at me and hurried quickly on.

Once again the birds and the bees and the flowers and the trees console me. Deep, soft moss and grass and flowers scent the air with different and delicious, dank odors and make a pleasant resting spot amidst the kaleidoscopic shade of the forest. The softly gurgling, swirling brook and the busy bees droning a dizzily lazy drivel are more pleasant to me. I am not alone among many but happy with no one.

- Everett Wilde - '38