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Written the morning after Prairie Group, 1993

Good Friends All,

I am sending to you my gratitude for your most tender and gracious solicitude at our meetings this year because of the sorrows that have come to my family.

I know, -- there were some of you who either did not know or could not speak. But I felt the love and support of each one of you, in silence as well as in words.

This truth did not come home to me right away. Not until after I had gone home, told Muriel my stories, led that evening a public meeting of our local ACLU, then returned home, went to bed, and to sleep.

I woke up in the dawn's early light and was again overwhelmed by my oldest son's death and my second son's life-threatening situation. Somehow there sprang into my head the memory of our spontaneous singing "For All The Saints" at the end of our hilarious "business" meeting. I do not know who began the hymn, but that does not matter. I do not know whether your singing was meant to comfort me, but that too does not matter. I do know I have never in all my life found a better feeling for the word "Hallelujah" than in our lusty repetition of that ancient chant. I was more than comforted -- I was on high.

Equally as good as the hallelujah was our jubilation over the normally silent first down beat which we irreverently thumped on the table. This is not the first time I have joked with God; and this time it was wonderful.

I have loved Prairie Group for many reasons, but chiefly for its laughter. How often we have seriously argued with one another. But very seldom, if ever, with rancor. Always our wisdom and our foolishness have been seasoned with laughter. As is spoken in the Gospel of Will Shakespeare, "How many things by season season'd are/ To their right praise and true perfection!" There is always "a time to laugh" as well as "a time to weep."

So I send my heartfelt salute and my love to all of you. And I bid you, Remember laughter.

Jack