

Morning View Kentucky  
10 September 1957

Hello Mr. McCarthy,

Never, even on magnificent spring days, have I seen more exhilaration, more excited exultation than that with which the tree patch and its inhabitants greeted daylight this morning. It was finally raining.

Cities and industries have their water problems, but only in open country, where all vegetation, from the greatest trees to the smallest blade of grass, is excruciatingly thirsty, where the dust lies deep while birds and small animals cluster about the shores of shrinking ponds, can the fearful importance of water be really appreciated.

As the land grows more and more parched through the long, hot days, a strange panic, like a creeping contagion, spreads through the air with the haze of dust, until even inanimate things seem to echo it, and it tingles raggedly in the nerve centers of men. With increasing frequency, people scan the unproductive sky as each day opens with a hot, dry sunrise and closes with an equally scorching sunset.

So it has been here. Our last rain, other than an almost worthless minute shower, was on the night of July Fourth. The big rain which soaked the Cincinnati area several weeks after that, sending mud into the Coney pool and converting Covington's 19th Street into a swirling torrent, brushed us with only ~~xx~~ a few moments of gentle rain. The great storms pouring upon Cincinnati were clearly visible to the North, appearing so near that one could almost touch the thick rain curtains. Off to the South, other heavy clouds released inches of rain also.

What moisture we received, checked only briefly the dryness which was penetrating deeper and deeper into the soil. Mid-August found the oak leaves sagging dustily limp from the twigs -- even the big thick, glistening leaves of the black oaks seemed dull and shrunken as they closed their pores to conserve moisture. Other trees were as visibly affected, the maple leaves appearing almost to fold as they contracted, while along the outer edges of the broad hickory leaves, brown, burned patches spread sullenly. Pasture grass became brittle, and dun-colored and slippery. Only on slopes lying above deep-set ponds, did the dew bring feeble nightly relief and maintain a faint shading of green.

Many crops suffered pathetically. Early corn which had attained sufficient growth to carry through on the July Fourth rain, managed to do well. Tobacco was scorched and sad. It had been able to find more than ample moisture early in the summer, with only a shallow