



EASTER GREETINGS

My Dearest Friends,

Before we get too far along here, let me say I'm feeling more than a bit ruffled and ruffled these days of threat to fiddle and fettle. I'm a little worse for the wear to be honest, and I expect you are too. And little enough to be done about that. You will realise, of course, we have to suspend the notion we can "do" much of anything in favour of doing what we can (or should do) in a crisis, but that's not appreciably different from how we make our way in the world all the rest of the time. We muddle through, do our level best to keep out of the soup kettle (eh-hmm). Bear in mind, this hope is not so "proverbial" to a goose as to some in our midst. I mean, have you thought about social distancing for a goose? Geese *flock*. It's what we do.

That said, we are doing our bit in the health crisis, flying in skeins as opposed to plumps (that's spread out instead of close together), and of course, geese are pretty practiced at keeping our distance on the ground - as long as others keep theirs.

This might amuse for a moment, as coincidence sometimes will. Last spring Grisel took a fledgling crow under her wing, Corvie 19, she called him - it was 2019 - and she took to posting some of his more curious antics on Instagram and Quacker, always with his name in the subject line. It started with him honking and gabbling, and then he started bringing her glittery gifts - bits of tinsel, shiny ribbon, a sparkly lost brooch, the clip off an old pen - and *then* she caught him clearing the drain holes on her nest box. Grisel has quite an elaborate nest box. Lately he's taken to hissing - daft bird thinks he's a goose. Anyway, Grisel made so many posts

about him that every time I read the words Corvid-19, I think what's he gone and done now? But the news isn't about our Corvie at all, and don't I wish it were! (You must forgive my maudlin, here).

Now, to the matter at hand, the Easter Letter, and after my Christmas letter I have to say, this feels like a splash in the dugout - only January to April to report on.

So, here it is: January was 31 days, and cold and wintery even in the south. Snow piled up on the makeshift roof on the Old Woman's house and it fell in on the lot of them, and her and her passell of children moved in with me. Yet again. This being a leap year, February was longer than usual, but it felt a lot shorter because the Old Woman and her lot moved into the brick house down the road when the Pigs left for their winter cruise. As the little one said, "Allone at last!" But March - oh my. March is going on longer than a goosewalk across the prairies even without the Old Woman and her crew in my house. The Pigs, for once, truly are at sea and no end in sight. With flights being grounded the world over, it looks as though even our Grisel will not be able to get them back just now.

Back at home, some of us are already set down in our spring prairies, waiting for the sloughs and dugouts and marshes to thaw, waiting for the redwing blackbirds to trill from the cattails, for the chickadees and finches and robins, and meadowlarks. And for our young ones when they arrive. Well, not the robins after all: I saw the first two of them just now, puffed up against the wind, enjoying a taste of last year's fermented cherries before the cedar waxwings move in and strip the tree bare in a day. Opportunism, it needs be said - and you must think Downton's Dowager Countess here - opportunism should be reserved for the lowest amongst us. Perhaps it is. And there's crows of course: the permanent residents rouse the morning as though they rule the day. But not our Corvie - he just gabbles and gaggles in the with the rest of us.

My Grisel has her house in order, and I expect the rest of us are following suit, similarly sanguine and unflappable regardless of how a season arrives or what comes with it. (Think the Dowager Countess again.) It's too late to beware. The Ides have passed but are with us still. Spring water is beginning to flow in the ditches and up over the footpaths in the parks. It slowly melts down into the rivers and creeks, and riles and chills and warms the mud the way the wind riles and inveigles the waking trees. You must keep your beak up.

May the spring sun shine soft...

As ever,

Mother Goose

p.s. Wondering if any one might have a typewriter in reasonable working order? Surplus from the War Office, this one - sticky keys, and typewriter repairs as scarce as hens' teeth. MG.

Save a goose - eat popcorn!