

*I write to you – no more confession is needed, nothing's left to tell. I know it's now in your discretion with scorn to make my world a hell. But, if you've kept some faint impression of pity for my wretched state, you'll never leave me to my fate. At first I thought it out of season to speak; believe me: of my shame you'd not so much as know the name, if I'd possessed the slightest reason to hope that even once a week I might have seen you, heard you speak on visits to us, and in greeting I might have said a word, and then thought, day and night, and thought again about one thing, till our next meeting. But you're not sociable, they say: you find the country godforsaken; though we... don't shine in anyway, our joy in you is warmly taken.*

*Why did you visit us, but why? Lost in our backwoods habitation I'd not have known you, therefore I would have been spared this laceration. In time, who knows, the agitation of inexperience would have passed, I would have found a friend, another, and in the role of virtuous mother and faithful wife I'd have been cast.*

*Another!... No, another never in all the world could take my heart! Deceid in highest court forever... heaven's will – for you I'm set apart; and my whole life has been directed and pledged to you, and firmly planned; I know, Godsent one, I'm protected until the grave by your strong hand: you'd made appearance in my dreaming; unseen, already you were dear, my soul had heard your voice ring clear, stirred at your gaze, so strange, so gleaming, long, long ago...no, that could be no dream. You'd scarce arrived, I reckoned to know you, swooned, and in a second all in a blaze, I said: it's he!*

*You know, it's true, how I attended, drank in your words when all was still – helping the poor, or while I mended with balm of prayer my torn and rended spirit that anguish had made ill. At this midnight of my condition, was it not you, dear apparition, who in the dark came flashing through and, on my bed-head gently leaning, with love and comfort in your meaning, spoke words of hope? But who are you: the guardian angel of tradition, or some vile agent of perdition sent to seduce? Resolve my doubt. Oh, this could all be false and vain, a sham that trustful souls work out; fate could be something else again...*

*So let it be! For you to keep I trust my fate to your direction, henceforth in front of you I weep, I weep, and pray for your protection... Imagine it: quite on my own I've no one here who comprehends me, and now a swooning mind attends me, dumb I must perish, and alone. My heart awaits you: you can turn it to life and hope with just a glance – or else disturb my mournful trance with censure – I've done all to earn it!*

*I close. I dread to read this page... for shame and fear my wits are sliding... and yet your honour is my gauge, and in it boldly I'm confiding*