

My world was at war. The doctors tell me I'm washed up and finished. I can no longer drive a car, work in the garden or travel, must avoid crowds, eat sparingly, observing one general rule: "If you like it, avoid it". What had I to be so glad about?

But I am glad and my heart sings. Having loved this present world, known its joys and enjoyed its pleasures, I can now do a bit of free-wheeling, and besides, I have a great treasure bestowed upon me, one that was never mine before. Now I have Time, a full issue, as long as it lasts. I feel like Scrooge on that beautiful sparkling Christmas morning when he, too, found something very precious.

Time! Blue-misted, rainbow-hued Time, tanged by the salt Pacific breeze—twenty-four hours a day to use as I wished. I have lost space and speed but won Time, and now I can actually summer-fallow my mind, and it needs just that after these long active years. Like the impatient prairie farmer, I have cropped it too steadily, forcing it to yield. Now I can construct a new life on a new pattern. For the first time in my life I can disregard the clock and the calendar, and write as I please.

One dark memory assails me in this matter of writing. Hitherto I have done my best work when I have had a few good, lively interruptions. When I began "Clearing in the West" I did the first third in my usual hit-and-miss manner, working at odd times, and running a house at the same time. I remember I used to set the alarm clock to remind me to turn on the oven for the next meal, and always in the back of my mind I promised myself that some day I would have a real chance at writing, when I had nothing else in the world to do. I often indulged in that pleasant dream and told myself that I had never really had a fair chance.

Later in that year, 1934, all the conditions were