

Dear neighbour,

Hello! I hope you will enjoy a little note in the mail, even if it's from a stranger. I always find that a little bit of news from someone else can be a welcome distraction, so I hope that this brings you a little bit of sunshine! Best to start with an introduction - my name's Charlotte, and I'm a medical student at McMaster. I haven't lived in the city long - my family is all up in Northern Ontario. They tell me that in Thunder Bay, it's still quite cold, the snow still deep - I picture the city blanketed in white, with woodsmoke coming from chimneys here and there. My grandfather lives in a house overlooking the harbour. He tells me that there's been an icebreaker boat in the harbour, passing back and forth, slowly breaking up the ice so that the big grain ships can start their cold journeys across Lake Superior. I picture him there, in his window, overlooking the lake - perhaps with a nice cup of tea in his hand. He gets some good sun in the window - though it's a cold city, it certainly is bright! - and I imagine him warm in a plaid shirt there.

Here in my Hamilton apartment, we've been enjoying the warmer days! Yesterday it was so lovely outside that we opened all the windows to bring in the fresh air. I'm a little ashamed to admit how many cobwebs were blown loose from their various hiding places by the fresh spring wind - we were forced into a bit of vacuuming! Mom will be pleased. Outside in our yard, the grass has started to turn a little greener, and I can see the start of leaf-buds on the neighbour's tree. How nice it is that spring is coming! The other day, a raccoon visited our back deck while I stood right here, looking out the window - what a nosy little creature! And, I should say, surprisingly well-fed - he was enormous and quite slow-moving. Not the same as the wild animals I am used to seeing in Northern Ontario!

On the subject of animals, my roommate has a pet cat (he's a bit of a grumpy old man), who I have been trying to charm. I used to foster cats, and I'd like to consider myself a bit of a cat-whisperer, able to win over even the scruffiest of my occasional houseguests. Still, this particular cat has been very slow to warm. Well, I'm excited to share with you - I have made a breakthrough! Yesterday, he came and willingly sat on my lap for a short while, purring like a machine. Perhaps in these coming months, he and I will become closer friends. I'd like that.

Well, I should go off and do some reading - I'm lucky in that there is a research project I can contribute to during this time. We're all cheering for you - all of your neighbours. I am so hopeful for our country - the ways that we are coming together in this time feel like the best kind of patriotism. Now, it's your turn to do your part - listen to your nurses, do your exercises, and get well soon. We need you, and we miss you out here.

**Best wishes,
your neighbour Charlotte**



Letters for Hamilton