

So, this is my life.

Humble!

We live in the country in a simple two-story farmhouse with a large oak tree in front and two fields of crops behind. The walls are mostly bare, and we have no electricity or running water. Our furniture is handmade out of ash and oak, and sturdy enough to last for generations. Our farm isn't large, but still requires many long days, and sometimes evenings, to plant and cultivate the crops using only a horse's raw and beautiful strength.

All our clothes are homemade and in simple colors. I like green - light green, dark green, lime green – any shade of green, really. To me, it's a beautiful color. Because most of my clothes are green, my friends and family always call me 'Jenny Green.' It's almost a nickname, except my name really is Jenny Green.

There were times when someone called me Jenny, and I gave them a blank stare because they didn't say the word 'Green' afterwards – and I've been told my gaze could freeze a person. So, nobody calls me Jenny or Jen anymore, and not even Jennifer. They all refer to me as Jenny Green. Even my brothers and sisters call me by my full name, and my parents do too.

Perhaps I shouldn't admit it, but I enjoy hearing my full name. Maybe it's our culture, or perhaps it's just that my family has a unique sense of humor. I refer to my oldest brother as my little brother, and my oldest sister as my twin. I know most people would say we have no sense of humor,

but that's not true. They may not see it, but we do laugh sometimes, so that's all that truly matters.

My friends will sometimes call me 'Jenny Green Jeans' just because they think it's fun to see if I will answer to it or not. They don't know how close they are to the truth - I do want to wear jeans just like city girls do. I have some friends who tell me, "Jenny Green, you should be a city girl." They're right, of course. And when I have my Rumspringa, I may decide to live there and be free.

My days are lengthy because there is so much work to be done here, and life can seem very repetitive. But sometimes we leave our farm.

We may go to the beach once or twice during summer, but it takes over three hours by bus, and we don't go if there is too much work to be done.

I love going to the beach. The last time we went was magical, but if it weren't for our bus arriving late to collect us at the end of the day, we would never have taken that walk along the shore just as the sun was setting.

The sky was ablaze in orange and red. It was spectacular. A couple of stars were shining brightly above, and the lake was in a somber mood. The ripples lapped invitingly at my bare feet. It was the perfect temperature for wading and wondering. And that's what I was doing, wading and wondering.

We approached an area of pine trees. I could smell the sweetness of the pine tar seeping out from them, but what was indeed amazing were the dragonflies that appeared from the darkness of the dunes and trees. They came gently wafting out, hovering over us, and zigzagging in contorted circles. There were so many, and yet they never collided.

Their natural skill in avoiding collisions made me wonder why humans can't be more like that. It seems some people head right into a collision with another person instead of avoiding it. How lucky the dragonflies are to live in the dunes among the sweet-smelling pine trees. Maybe it's because each one understands how fortunate they are to be there.

So anyway, here I am with my family on a farm tucked away in a remote area in the Midwest. I sit here at my desk and write in my diary almost every night, looking out the window as the sun fades and the moon appears for its nightly duty. I often think of the sun and moon as actors on a stage. One actor politely bowing out so the other can proceed with the next act.

The sky isn't clear every night, of course, but when it is, it's incredible to see so many stars, and sometimes one will glimmer and stream across the darkness of the night sky. It's like God is using a finger to rearrange a small part of his universe.

I love seeing the moon too. There's a kind of magic in it.

Sometimes I close my eyes and recite part of a poem I wrote the first time I realized the moon had such a hold on me: 'A haunted universe whispers between dueling planets as cosmic factories of light produce beams of hope.' Then I open my eyes, take a deep breath, and let myself wonder what my life would be like if I were not living here in this simple farmhouse without electricity or dwelling in this insipid society.

Such are the dreams of this Amish girl.