

**Addressed to:** Mr Joshua Johnston, Stromness

**From:** Mr Rob<sup>t</sup> Laing, Kirk<sup>l</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1784

Kirkwall 31st March 1784

Sir

My sister Janet has sent me your letters to her of the 16 Jan<sup>y</sup> & 11 & 29 curr<sup>t</sup> & desired I would answer them. Indeed they surprise me not a little as well as it has hurt her more than any thing she ever met with in life (her husband's death excepted). How you come to imagine that she has money is to me amazeing. Consider with yourself what was she to live on this ten years since she & her husband parted. Let me tell you that during that period she has not cost me less than £250 Sterl<sup>g</sup> and had I been inclined to gone strickly to work £300 Sterl<sup>g</sup> would not have done it. From the time of your brother's marriage and until his departure to Quebec, he did not draw less than £300 Sterl<sup>g</sup> by her and all that the poor woman has in return for that sum by your brother's will is only one third of his effects, and even of that I see an intention of cutting her out of one third of it. But I shall explain this matter more fully to your brother's executors, Mess<sup>rs</sup> Johnston & Purss in Quebec, and as they are the only ex<sup>rs</sup>, leave it to them to judge & to clear it up. It's true her brother by his will has allotted her £50 p<sup>f</sup> annum out of the residuum of his fortune, but when such will be recovered is more than I or any man can say. I am sure it cannot be this y<sup>f</sup> or perhaps this 10 years to come, tho in the mean time I am firmly resolved she shall be provided for while I can afford it. But do you or any person imagine that I am so blind to my own interest or to the welfare of my family that if she had any money that I would not reimburse myself for the above sum I mentioned to you. I beg in future that in place of corresponding with her you would with me & I am

Sir, your most h<sup>l</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

Robert Laing