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How to Welcome

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How to Welcome

Mike Vanden Bosch

I see you through the gap, letter lady, as
your door stands ajar—sitting on the same
ridged chair at the same blood-red desk—
sorting letters as you did four years ago.

Your wrinkled smile beckoned me then,
face beaming like a child's bringing flowers
to mommy whenever you brought a letter
across cultures to a language teacher.

Now *you* see me and suddenly the same smile
lights your cubby hole and the same sounds—
gleeful supra-lingual grunts—sing *I love you*
in a way no balladeer could match. Then you

jump up, grab the other stiff chair and motion
me into your cramped cubby hole to sit down.
For five minutes dumb as lambs we sit and rock
in stiff chairs grunting, smiling like old friends.

Postal woman, you welcome more warmly than
a queen with lavish feasts, than a father hugging
his lost son. You could teach a word-rich world
what a welcome touch the Lamb has waiting.