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## The Letter

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*Mary Dengler*

“Can you come home right now?” my husband asked.  
“What for? Are you all right? I’ve work to do.”  
“Something serious has happened. I’ll explain  
When you get home.” A letter had arrived, years after  
That traumatic birth. It was the shock I thought  
I’d never have on earth: to hear if he was living,  
Dead, or struggling on the street. First the letter  
From his counselor arrived. In terms discreet,  
She’d written how he’d searched for me for years.  
And now, after her call inquiring if I’d want to meet  
Him after all this time, his letter came, expressing fears,  
But gratitude—for birthing him; he’d been adopted  
By a loving home. He’d planned to offer help,  
He said, envisioning me on Fremont Street, Wild Turkey  
bottle in my hand, bonbons in my mouth. How could this be?  
I’d closed the books—I’d wanted to protect him  
From well-meaning, troubled relatives  
Who’d complicate his life. I didn’t know  
His mother and his own genetic code  
Would prompt his search. How did I feel?  
As if my molecules were separating, turning into light,  
Re-fusing to a star, transcending ordinary time. From that  
Rebirth I learned to breathe anew; sat down to write  
The most important letter of my life and his,  
And mailed it overnight. Two days from then he called.  
Again I was reborn, as was the dad he didn’t know I’d wed  
After a gunshot rearranged his troubled head and put us  
Back together on a road that circles and returns,  
With nothing left behind. Now, pictures floated  
Toward me, on my screen—four decades of his checkered life,  
Each focused on a phase I’d missed. I looked in mirrors  
Of myself, at images of family passed—unruly  
Locks of darkest hair, and eyes of darkest brown, the frame  
Of husband here and father gone. In him, both families  
—Scot and English—were reborn, made gold in petri dish  
With godly Dutch Reformed, as only God can do.  
He gave us life, redeemed our past, and moved us  
Forward with this gift—our unplanned, unforgotten,  
Stunning child of God.