

Letter Nostalgia

I'm nostalgic for letters, the kind that came delivered to mailboxes, with decorative stamps and kissed envelopes, sometimes lined in gold, and airmail letters in their wispy envelopes, with airplanes flying in the corner - PAR AVION - under the wings, and inside, news written on transparent paper, heavier for all the ink scrawled margin to margin. I'm nostalgic for handwriting and all its inconsistencies; the lilt of *l* in the signature line *love*, the swings of *s*'s, and sweet nod of the letter *t*. I could see who was buzzed on espresso, or tired, or drunk when writing, by how the words skated or staggered, how the lines wavered across the page, fell off the edge, picked up more crooked than before. And sometimes an enclosure: a clover or flower pedal of the season. I'm nostalgic for the ritual of waiting for the mailman to arrive, the sweet anticipation of his drive up to the mailbox with its flag standing at attention, his hand reaching out, pulling open that black box for the letters waiting for him, placing within those waiting for me. But mostly, I'm nostalgic for the girl I was then, with her whole life ahead of her, thinking that her future could be determined by what was in that envelope, that handwriting, that signature line, that four-leafed clover.