

Considering the Mailman

by Christopher Cocca

I fell asleep in the living room last night, and it feels like it was early. The mailman came at 10 and that felt late. I woke up to Scout's routine, a war dance with the curtain on the door because he hates the mailman. Mailmen. Their trucks on our street. He pulls his leash and grits his teeth to feel the muscles in his neck. I think he might pop the collar, tear the leash, run straight for the mailman.

It's not just the mailman. It's the logo on the mailbox down the street. It's the uniform. It's any man or woman in the whole unsettling profession. They are professionally rude, I think he has decided, and intrusive. Nosy. Every day, an agent of the federal government is on our porch, putting things in our door. Taking our things with him. Letters, checks, Christmas cards. Scout thinks this is all a trick. Anyone who comes to the porch should knock, should be let in, should stay. He does not trust their cold efficiency, their comings and goings like Jesus bugs on water.

They are a fleet of federal agents, an armada for the mail. They are arteries or clots depending on your politics. My dog is a libertarian. He'd prefer to get our messages from smoke or pigeon, some earthy conduit, something untainted by the order of it all, by postmarks and by zip codes, and, by God, by stamps.

