

Dear Joe,

by Glynnis Eldridge

Walk alone at night, quietly. Pause for eye contact with raccoons and night cats, your drunk self, and lights in the graveyard. Don't apologize for it in the morning. Instead of the shame you feel for one time acting selfishly and chasing a future, say you haven't got the time to again say you're sorry more seriously or deeply or sincerely than you've said it. Your voice won't allow it. In the morning, feet quietly pace around the apartment, past your door, down the stairs and come back up and go back down again. The world was spinning when you went horizontal after the onset of the 2am, wednesday morning headache. You get up, you stand up, you stumble. A trip to the bathroom then back to bed. A scare that it might be a different weekday, a later hour, an errand missed. When you get up again the sky is grey and your phone buzzes with notes from your grandmother in the city: Did you hear the sad news about Joe? NYTimes today. Your last email to him, a mere draft, written in August, no doubt during another fight in the east midwest; "...terribly sorry to have taken so long to respond. How are you doing? Are you recovering?" You had thought about sending a box of cookies. In his last email to you, he wrote about his radiation. He wrote about your granddad, not dead, seemingly getting there, "...leave him in peace, he has earned it... just tell him I love him, and that his confidence in me has carried me through my whole career... please keep me up to date on what you're doing."

this is how time works, this is how it is demonstrated: the regret of an email never sent, the regret of an idea left an idea, of another un-uttered hello, condolences kept private. a wish for eyes to see.

