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Letter From A Mental Hospital

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KIM LOZANO

LETTER FROM A MENTAL HOSPITAL

From the heart of an old box of letters
I lift a small water-stained envelope.
Inside, a notecard as thin and brittle as a frozen leaf
bears a message written fifty years ago
by a woman who shares my name.

She delivers no greeting, no sorry to have been away so long.
She leaves no record of visitors, rationed cigarettes,
group art, or the barren iceberg of treatment.

184 I imagine her listening to the ping of the radiator
on a snowy morning, seated in her nightgown and socks
by an open window. A bell rings in the hallway
but she doesn't move toward her robe or her slippers or her brush.

I see myself sitting beside her, reaching
toward her dull pencil to place my fingers over hers,
hand on hand, gliding over the words, moving
like two skaters on a lake tracing the solitary line—
Please come get me.

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