



The Life Beneath the Noise

LETTER FOUR

From the Porch

Dear one,

There is a kind of noise that comes from the world around us.

The messages.

The appointments.

The news.

The opinions.

The questions waiting to be answered.

The endless stream of things asking for our attention.

But there is another kind of noise too.

The noise we carry inside.

The rehearsed conversations.

The second-guessing.

The plans made three times over.

The voice that asks whether we are doing enough.

The fear that we are falling behind.

The pressure to keep moving, even when we are no longer certain where we are going.

It can become so constant that we forget it is noise at all.

We begin to believe it is simply what life sounds like.

But beneath it, something quieter is still there.

Your life.

Not the life being measured.

Managed.

Explained.

Compared.

Or performed.

The life that belongs to you.

Sometimes we become so busy responding to life that we lose touch with the experience of living it.

We move from one responsibility to the next.

We make the call.

Drive the route.

Prepare the meal.

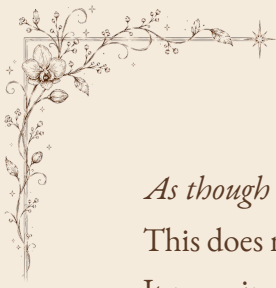
Complete the task.

Think about tomorrow while standing inside today.

The days pass, full and accounted for.

And yet somewhere within them, we feel strangely absent.





As though we have been present for everything except ourselves.

This does not mean you have done anything wrong.

It may simply mean the volume has been turned up for too long.

Noise can make urgency feel like truth.

Everything appears important.

Everything feels immediate.

Every choice seems capable of changing the entire direction of our lives.

We hurry because the world hurries.

We respond because something has arrived.

We look outward for the next instruction.

What should I do?

What would make the most sense?

What are other people choosing?

What will they think?



What if I get it wrong?

These questions can become so loud that we stop hearing the quieter ones:

What do I notice?

What do I miss?

What feels true?

What is asking to be tended?

What kind of life am I actually living?

The quieter questions rarely demand an immediate answer.

They do not arrive with alarms.

They do not insist.

They wait.

Sometimes for years.

They appear while you are washing a cup.

Driving alone.

Standing near an open window.

Walking somewhere without your phone in your hand.

They come as a feeling before they become language.

A soft ache.

A sense of distance.

A longing you cannot yet explain.

The recognition that something in your life no longer fits the way it once did.
Or the sudden memory of something that used to make you feel alive.
These moments are easy to dismiss.
There is always something louder nearby.
But quiet does not mean unimportant.
Some of the truest things in us speak very softly.
Perhaps there are parts of your life that have been buried beneath necessity.
Things you once loved.
Ways you used to spend time.
Dreams you set aside because the practical demands were greater.
Maybe you stopped painting.
Writing.
Gardening.
Reading without trying to learn something.
Taking the long way home.
Listening to music simply because it moved you.
Maybe it has been so long that you no longer know what you enjoy.
That can feel frightening.
But not knowing does not mean that part of you is gone.
It may only mean she has been waiting beneath the noise.
There are seasons when survival must be loud.
When life becomes appointments, medication, caregiving, bills, decisions, and getting through the next hour.
There are times when tending the inner life feels impossible because the outer life requires everything we have.
You do not need to judge yourself for those seasons.
They are real.



And sometimes simply enduring them is enough.

But when the crisis softens, even slightly, the body may continue living as though the alarm is still sounding.

We stay braced.

Alert.

Ready for the next thing.

Still moving at the speed the emergency required.

It can take time to realize we are allowed to lower our shoulders.

That we no longer have to listen for danger in every quiet room.

Perhaps silence itself feels uncomfortable.

When the television is off and the phone is set down, you may not immediately feel peaceful.

You may feel restless.

Lonely.

Exposed.



You may become aware of how much you have been avoiding.

This does not mean you should fill the space again.

It means the quiet is honest.

At first, quiet may show you the tiredness.

The grief.

The resentment.

The unanswered question.

But if you remain with it gently, it may also show you something else.

Your own company.

Your own preferences.

Your own pace.

The life that has been waiting beneath all that sound.

You do not need to disappear into the woods for a month to find yourself again.

You do not need a complete life change.

You may only need small places where nothing is speaking over you.

A few minutes before the house wakes.

A drive without a podcast.



A walk without tracking the distance.
A meal without scrolling.
A chair near a window.
A notebook with no purpose.
A cup of something warm held long enough to notice its warmth.
The quieter life often returns through ordinary doors.
Maybe you are afraid of what you will hear.
What if the truth asks something of you?
What if you realize you are unhappy?
What if you want more?
What if you want less?
What if the life you have worked so hard to build is not the life your heart is asking for now?
You do not have to answer every truth with immediate action.
Awareness is not a contract.
You can notice without changing everything.
You can admit something to yourself before you know what to do with it.
You can sit beside a truth until it becomes clear what kind of response it needs.
Some truths ask us to leave.
Some ask us to stay differently.
Some ask for one honest conversation.
Some ask only to be acknowledged.
You are allowed to listen before you decide.
The world may have many opinions about what your life should look like.
It may tell you to want more.
Achieve more.
Own more.
Heal faster.
Be more visible.
Be more disciplined.
Make every interest profitable.



Turn every quiet thing into something useful.

But the life beneath the noise may not be asking for more.

It may be asking for enough.

Enough room.

Enough sleep.

Enough honesty.

Enough time to notice the season changing.

Enough space to hear your own thoughts before someone else tells you what they should be.

Enough life left over after responsibility.

There may be a version of you who exists mostly in response to others.

She is attentive.

Adaptable.

Considerate.

She knows how to read the room.

She can sense what is needed before anyone says it.

These are beautiful capacities.

But when you are always adjusting to the people around you, it can become difficult to recognize your own natural shape.

What do you prefer when no one else is choosing?

What pace feels like yours?

What do you believe before you explain it?

What would you keep if no one applauded?

What would you stop doing if no one were disappointed?

You do not need perfect answers.

Just let the questions create a little space around you.

The life beneath the noise is not necessarily dramatic.

It may be smaller than the life you have been told to pursue.

It may include fewer obligations.

Fewer performances.

Fewer people with access to every part of you.



It may look ordinary from the outside.
A slower morning.
A home that is lived in.
Work that does not consume your identity.
Relationships where silence is safe.
Time that is not optimized.
Joy that is private.
A life does not have to impress anyone to be deeply yours.
I wonder what remains when you stop explaining yourself.
When you are not someone's mother, partner, daughter, employee, helper, or friend.
When you are not managing how others experience you.
When you are not proving that your choices make sense.
Who is there?
Perhaps you do not know yet.
That is all right.
You are not a problem to solve.





You are someone to become acquainted with again.

Slowly.

Without interrogation.

Without turning self-discovery into another task.

You can begin the way you would begin with anyone you hoped to know well.

By paying attention.

Notice what softens you.

What drains you.

What makes time feel spacious.

What makes your body tighten before your mind has found a reason.

Notice the places where you become more yourself.

Notice the people around whom you do not rehearse.

Notice what you reach for when no one is watching.

Notice what brings relief, not just distraction.

Your life is speaking all the time.

Not loudly.

But faithfully.

You may not be able to quiet the whole world.

There will still be responsibilities.

Notifications.

People who need you.

Plans that change.

Days that become louder than expected.

The goal is not to create a perfectly silent life.

It is to remember that the noise is not the whole of it.

There is a place within you that does not need to compete for attention.

You can return to it.

Again and again.

Even for one breath.

For today, let one thing become quiet.

Turn something off.

Step away from a conversation that can wait.

Leave one opinion unread.



Do one ordinary thing without adding anything else to it.

Wash the cup.

Fold the blanket.

Stand outside.

Watch the light move across the room.

Let the moment be only what it is.

You may notice almost nothing.

That is enough.

Quiet is not always a revelation.

Sometimes it is simply the absence of demand.

And in that absence, perhaps you will feel something small return.

A preference.

A memory.

A question.

A sense of yourself standing a little closer.

Do not rush toward it.

Do not ask it to explain where it has been.

Just make room.

The life beneath the noise has not abandoned you.

It has been living quietly underneath everything.

Waiting for you to hear it.

With warmth,

From the Porch

