



Leave the Porch Light On

LETTER EIGHT

From the Porch

Dear one,

There is a particular kind of comfort in seeing a light left on for you.

A small glow against the dark.

A quiet sign that says:

You are expected.

You have not been forgotten.

There is still a place for you here.

The porch light does not ask where you have been. It does not need an explanation for why you are late. It does not measure how much you accomplished before returning.

It simply remains.

Steady.

Warm.

Visible from a distance.

And perhaps that is what I hope these letters have been for you.

A light left on.

You came to this porch carrying things.

Maybe more than you realized.

Responsibilities.

Questions.

Exhaustion.

Longings you had learned not to name.

The weight of other people's needs.

The fear that changing might take you too far from who you have always been.

You sat down.

Perhaps only for a few minutes.

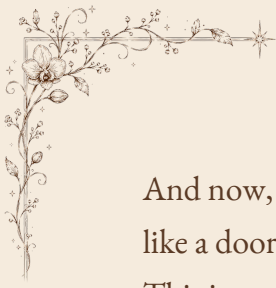
Perhaps long enough to hear something beneath the noise. Long enough to remember that you are allowed to rest.

Allowed to want.

Allowed to put down what does not belong to you. Allowed to become more fully yourself.

Nothing here required you to arrive whole. You were welcomed exactly as you came.





And now, as this first collection comes to a close, I do not want it to feel
like a door shutting behind you.

This is not the kind of place you complete and leave forever. There is no final page that means
you should no longer need
somewhere quiet to return.

There will be days when you feel steady. Days when you know exactly what belongs in your
hands. Days when your life feels spacious and true.

And there will be other days.

Days when the noise returns.

When old patterns feel familiar.

When you say yes too quickly.

Carry too much.

Question what you know.

Forget that rest is allowed.

Forget that your own life belongs to you too.

On those days, come back.

You do not have to begin again perfectly. You do not have to repeat every lesson. You do not
have to be disappointed in yourself because something you understood yesterday feels difficult
today.

Knowing does not make us immune to being human.

We can learn a boundary and still struggle to hold it. We can understand our worth and still feel
the old ache of not being
chosen.



We can believe in rest and still find ourselves working past exhaustion. We can know that a burden is not ours and still reach for it out of habit. This does not mean the work was lost. It means change is lived more than once.

Return is part of becoming.

There is no shame in needing the same truth again.

Perhaps you have heard the words you have done enough many times, but one evening they will finally reach the tired place inside you. Perhaps you have known for years that you cannot save everyone, but one relationship will ask you to learn it in a deeper way. Perhaps you already understand that you are allowed to want something, but naming the real desire will still make your voice tremble.

Truth often arrives in layers.

We receive only what we are ready to hold.

Then life opens another room.

We enter.

And the same truth meets us there with a different face. So leave room in your life for returning.

Return to the question.

Return to the quiet.

Return to your body.

Return to what you knew before fear began speaking over it.

Return to the chair near the window.

The walk without a destination.

The page that does not need to become anything. The conversation in which you tell the truth. The evening when you stop before everything is finished. Return does not mean you failed to move forward. Sometimes returning is how we find the path again. Maybe you have spent much of your life believing that home is

something outside you.

A place.

A person.

A relationship.

A house where everyone is finally safe and kind. A future where nothing feels uncertain. There is nothing wrong with longing for a home that holds you well. We all need places where our bodies can soften. People with whom we do not have to perform. Rooms that feel peaceful when we enter them. But perhaps home is also something you are learning to build within yourself.

A way of staying near your own truth. A refusal to abandon yourself in order to be accepted. A willingness to notice when you are tired. A practice of listening before the world gives you an answer. A voice inside that says:

Come back.



You belong here too.

This inner home may not always feel peaceful. Sometimes coming home to yourself means meeting what you have avoided.

Grief.

Anger.

Loneliness.

A truth that asks for change.

Home is not the absence of difficult feelings. It is the place where those feelings no longer require you to leave yourself.

You can be sad and remain.

Afraid and remain.

Uncertain and remain.

You can sit beside what hurts without turning against the woman who is hurting.

That is a kind of shelter.

Perhaps there were years when you could not do that. Years when survival required distance. You kept moving because stopping was not safe. You became useful because usefulness protected your place. You learned to disconnect from your needs because there was no one available to meet them.

Do not judge the ways you survived.

They brought you here.

But you may not need every old protection forever.

The door is different now.

The room is quieter.





You are allowed to discover what it feels like to remain present in your own life.

Leaving the porch light on does not mean waiting endlessly for someone who has chosen not to return.

It does not mean keeping every door open. It does not mean offering unlimited access to people who repeatedly bring harm into your home.

A light can be warm without becoming an invitation to cross every boundary.

You can be loving and still close the door. You can forgive and still protect the room. You can wish someone well without giving them a place beside your peace.

The porch light is not abandonment of discernment.

It is a symbol of welcome.

And you are allowed to decide what—and whom—you are welcoming. Perhaps the light is for another woman. Someone who may someday find her way to this porch because you told the truth about what helped you.

Not because you need to rescue her.

Not because her healing becomes your responsibility. But because sometimes we leave small lights for one another.

A sentence.

A story.

A hand resting briefly on a shoulder. A message that says:

I have felt that too.

You are not strange.

You are not alone.

You may never know how far a small light travels.

But first, leave the light on for yourself.

For the woman you will be tomorrow.

For the version of you who may wake tired and forget everything she promised herself tonight.

For the woman in another season who will return to these words with a different life around her.

For the one who will face a decision she cannot yet imagine. For the one who will need to remember that she has survived before. You do not have to know what she will need. Just do not make it difficult for her to find her way back.

Leave evidence.

A note beside the bed.

A boundary written clearly before guilt rewrites it.

A list of what steadies you.

The name of the person you can call.

A photograph of the place where you felt most like yourself.



A book marked at the page that found you. A small ritual at the end of the day.
A chair that belongs to quiet.
Build reminders into your life before you need them. Not because you expect to become lost.
Because all of us sometimes do.
You may be tempted to believe that after all this reflection, you should
now know exactly what comes next.
You may expect a plan.
A declaration.
A completely changed life.
But perhaps what comes next is simply tomorrow.
The same kitchen.
The same responsibilities.
The same people.
The same unresolved things.
And you, returning to them with one small difference.
A little more awareness.
A little less willingness to disappear. A deeper recognition of what your body is telling you. A
moment of pause before the automatic yes.
A quiet question:
Is this mine to carry?



Small differences can alter the shape of an ordinary life. You do not need to change everything in order for something to have changed.

Maybe you rest twenty minutes sooner.

Maybe you let a message wait.

Maybe you ask for what you want instead of hoping someone notices. Maybe you allow another person to be disappointed. Maybe you speak to yourself with tenderness at the end of a difficult day.

Maybe you walk past the old burden and leave it where it belongs. These choices may look almost invisible from the outside.

But you will feel them.

They are ways of turning the light back on.

There will still be darkness.

The porch light does not remove the night.

It does not show the entire road.

It offers only enough light to see the next few steps. Perhaps that is all we are ever truly given.

Not certainty.

Not the full map.

Just enough light to know where the door is.



Enough to place one foot carefully.

Enough to remember we are not walking toward nothing. You do not need to see the whole future to trust the next honest step. There may be moments when you cannot see the light.

Grief may be too thick.

Fear may make the familiar road look strange.

You may feel far from yourself.

In those moments, do not assume the light has gone out. Sometimes we are simply standing where the view is blocked.

Wait.

Breathe.

Ask for help.

Let someone walk beside you.

Keep moving gently in the direction of what has felt true. The light may come into view again sooner than you think. And when you are the one standing safely on the porch, remember the woman still making her way through the dark.

Do not speak to her harshly.

Do not tell her she should have arrived by now. Do not shame her for the roads she took while trying to survive.

Lift the lantern.

Let her see where you are.

Say:

There you are.

Take your time.

The chair is still here.



She is not separate from you.

She is you, in every season when returning takes longer.

Dear one, you do not have to hold the light perfectly. There will be evenings when it flickers.

Times when you forget to tend it.

Times when you need to borrow warmth from someone else's fire. That is why we leave lights for one another. No one is meant to be the only source of warmth in her own life.

Receive what is offered.

Let yourself be guided.

Let yourself be welcomed.

And when your strength returns, tend your own small flame again. This porch was never meant to become another place where you prove that you have learned enough.

It is a place to return.

A place to sit without explanation.

A place where unfinished women are welcome.

Where tired women are welcome.





Where women who are beginning again for the tenth time are welcome.

Where joy is welcome too.

Where laughter can live beside grief. Where nothing has to be made smaller in order to belong.
So when you close this letter, do not think of it as goodbye. Think of it as the moment you rise
from the chair and carry a little
warmth back inside.

The porch remains.

The evening settles.

The light stays on.

And whenever you need it— after a hard conversation, in the middle of a changing season,
when you have forgotten what you want, when you are carrying too much again, when you
simply need somewhere quiet to breathe—
you will know the way.

Come back as you are.

Bring what is true.

Set down what you can.

The porch is always open.

And the light will be waiting.

With warmth,

From the Porch