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Companion

Ryder Dietz

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RYDER DIETZ

Companion

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryder Dietz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and extends across the top right portion of the page.

It was 5th or 6th grade when we first met,
Those years, half a lifetime ago.
I tried to ignore you
Playing with Legos—destroying, sorting, then building
And for a brief moment
It worked.

Why did you fill my head with thoughts?
Thoughts of futures, both possible and not.
Inevitably, by the end of each, friends or I would grab your hand.
These thoughts plagued by darkness,
But I never gave them much heed,
For I always believed them to be ordinary.

I've never blamed you for all that you've taken.
Two dogs, a fish, and a guinea pig.
My former classmates, members of my family,
More of which seem to take your hand with every passing year,
Since winter break when I was 14.
When my grandmother and a classmate felt your grip.

Thank you for the only thing you've ever given me.
The ability to love Life and you.
In summer, the song of birds and cicadas
Paired with the dance of maggots and flies.
In autumn, the aroma of apples and pumpkins
With the feel of mushrooms and dead leaves.
In winter, the green pines and red fires
Stark against the white snow and gray skies.
In spring, filled with cool rain and colorful flowers
Covering the rotting logs and spreading fungi.

For a decade you've kept me company.
In my loneliest moments, I've found you there,
Silent, unwavering, calm.
I know for the coming years, you'll follow me.
Until the day comes when I can grab your hand
And follow you home.