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Substitution

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They told us not to write about love, so I have to imagine all my love letters. I don’t mind that my imaginings have all been done before; I can fall into clichés like warm blankets. I imagine that I am here, in one place, and that my love is in another place, tens or hundreds or maybe one thousand miles away, and that I must write love letters in order to make my true feelings shown. My favorite is when I imagine that I am sitting by a river in Europe, France maybe, and I write that I see a little blonde girl in a Sunday dress and black polished shoes hop-skipping along the river bank. I cannot tell if she is wholly real or not because of the way she disappears and reappears among the lampposts and café tables. I will write that this little girl reminds me of us, and of our futures together. I will write that I will return to this same spot by this river in Europe, Romania maybe, in hopes of seeing the little girl again, but that I don’t think she will come back, because the future has a way of appearing once and never happening again. Someday I might visit rivers in Europe and I would like to see a little blonde girl skipping among the shadows, but forgive me when I do not write the letter.