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Suckle

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I finally went to claim your ashes. I knew you would follow me back, but it didn't matter anymore. You would get in no matter what I did. Frustrated with my own fears and grief I buried myself in work. It seemed best to leave myself no time to think, and if I collapsed at the end of every day, all the better. At least some of those nights were dreamless. I had finally found the pace I needed to run at to keep you away.

Run. Yes, that's exactly what I did. Ran to a new life in a new state to a new calling. That's when the letters started. They were written on blank cards the hospital had sent as thanks for our donations to the cancer fund. Each one was printed with little paintings children in the cancer ward had made. They had sat in your home for years as you struggled alongside

them, two floors up where the adults were kept. I guess we never got around to throwing them away. You would be so proud of me, they said, you would be so happy. I dreaded going to the post office to pick them up, but they appeared every week like clockwork. You came along with them.

Now, when you're not waiting by the bed again, you reach me by phone call. Every insignificant accomplishment met by saying how much you'd have liked to see this, experience this with me. As my skin crawls and tears turn me glassy-eyed I just nod, my throat too tight to speak. You do see it, see me, every day. You haunt me still. No matter how hard I try, I just can't argue with your ghost.



Suckle Brianna Teafatiller