

Song to hum while opening mail from a friend

by [Brian Doyle](#) in the [August 20, 2014](#) issue

O the very fact that there are friends who write with their hands  
Even if just the forefingers hammering away on keyboards, and  
Also then print out the resulting muddle and scrawl and scribble  
And pop it in the postbox! The lickable areas on the envelopes!  
The Return Address Just in Case! The choice of stamps, and we  
All blessedly have friends who carefully choose their stamps, &  
Stand in line at the post office asking for the ones with Authors,  
Or members of the Simpson family, or stamps with Polar Bears!  
And the fact that there are fifty addresses in your memory, some  
Of them no longer inhabited by the people you loved to write to;  
Much like your mind retains past phone numbers and exchanges,  
Like Mayfair and Ludlow and Allegheny and Cypress and Tulip!  
And the fact that you can draw all morning on an envelope or by  
God paint it flagrantly with horses and angels, and your postman  
Will deliver it anyway! Probably grinning at the nut who mailed  
It to you! And you can put a few grains of sand inside your note,  
From the beach we went to as children, or a feather from a hawk  
Who glared in the window like an insurance adjuster with talons,  
Or a painting by a child, or a photograph of four of the names of  
That which we call God for lack of a better label. Even the folds  
Of the paper, and the paperiness of the paper, and the fact that it's  
All about miracles and affection, which is to say, of course, love!  
Sure it is. All the good parts are about love, in all its many masks.