

A House Far Away

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I see it from my back window, the one overlooking trees
in the summer, bare branches in the winter.

It's not a small house but so far away it seems matchbox size,
at night illuminated by a single spotlight so bright

it's the brightest light I see, brighter than all the other house lights
or street lights or lights from cars that trace a liquid river before me.

I imagine that my daughter lives in that house, or that she is the light—
because I don't know what shape a soul might take
or how messages are sent from another world.

(When the hall light dims but doesn't go out, is that her?
When a photo album drops and the page thrown open is filled
with photos of her, is that an accident?)

Every morning and evening I look out at the faraway house,
at its blazing light visible at dawn, at dusk, even through the rainiest fog,
and talk to my daughter as if she's just come out on the porch to say hello.

I tell her how I love her, how I miss her, and I ask her to watch over us,
her children and me—and the light burns steady, no flickering reply,

no blinking as if it can't quite hear.

I've given the light her name and her nickname,

and sometimes just walking through the room I'll glance over to see
if she's there, illuminated in the distance, content where she is,

even if so far away. I pretend she's waiting for me to walk
the winding road to her door, to the place made brilliant by her presence.