

August 1951

Dear Myrthen,

This'll be my fifth letter to you and since I ain't had a reply yet I'm starting to get a little worried. Really if I'm being honest, I'm starting to get a little angry. You made a promise to me and I expect someone who makes a promise to keep it, especially if it's your cousin and the woman you love and the one you killed a mess of decent people for.

Everything was just right. House was looking good. I fixed up the kitchen real nice and even put in a Washing Machine so you wouldn't have to work too hard once you got here. I bought it second hand but it worked fine, I even learned how to use it myself and was even thinking maybe I'd just keep on doing it even after you got here, even though it's women's work. It has a real nice crank on it and wrings clothes out for you without even having hardly to touch them. Every day I went down to the post office to see if a letter came, telling me the day you were going to be coming. Also I kept things neat as I could, just in case you came without announcing it first. About every three four days, I picked a mess of flowers and had them on the kitchen table in case you showed up because I wanted you to know I was welcoming you and was glad you were finally here and that I would be good to you and that we could just forget about Verra and Blackstone and everything else from back home. We could just start over, you and me.

But then, you never did write to me, and you never did show up and then one night I came home after working hard all day and I had a handful of wildflowers, all yellow and delicate and hopeful looking, and I don't know maybe it was the way the sun was setting behind the house or something carried on the breeze but I just knew in my heart that when I walked up you'd be setting right there on the front porch with your bags just waiting for me. And my heart was beating fast when I pulled up, and I jumped out of my truck, well it wasn't really mine but I was using it, and I ran up the porch steps two at a time even though I didn't see you because maybe you'd just gone in since I never locked the door.

Course, you wasn't there.

What happened next is hard to remember except that I know I got real angry. There was some gasoline in the back of the pickup,

extra since it's not always close to the filling station. I remember pouring it out on the porch where you were supposed to be waiting for me and more in the kitchen and on the Washing Machine and I think I might've even poured some on that stupid cow I stole for you because when it was all said and done and the sheriff came I remember him saying what a shame it was to watch a cow get burned up alive. He just stood there next to me and he asked me what happened and I don't remember exactly what I said, but it must have been something, because he just stood there next to me leaning on the truck until the flames died way down and the house was nothing but a smoking pile black as a car full of coal, and then he cuffed me and took me down to the station.

So here I am in the Montana State Prison. I got sentenced four years with a chance for parole for good behavior. I'm going to be real good Myrthen, you can believe it, because when I get out, I'm coming for you.

*Yours truly,
Liam*