

Dear Mother,

I do not believe that I will ever send this letter to you, as I would like to think of it as a confession, despite the fact that I will emerge a coward once again. There is a lot I would wish to tell you, and not enough time or words in the world. I always thought it was funny how I was unnecessarily verbose, now even writing a letter to you, despite the fact that you can't understand me, even a little. I know that you don't try, and in turn, I don't either. I think that I'm a little scared of what you really think.

I find it difficult to voice any concerns, any complaints, even any compliments against you. I value logic and rules, and I sometimes find myself wishing for coherency from others unfairly. I believe that I wished this for you, once. Your unpredictability frightens me, scaring my conveyance away. My love of communication was the one thing that I knew could never let me down, after a lifetime you are doing that very thing. Yet when I try to reply to you, no words can come out of my mouth. I can't say a word of bad against you, can't criticize you, can't praise you, can't do anything. I exist as a spectator to your mundane conversations, to your deeply impersonal small-talk. Sometimes I sit there and agree, but most of the time, I sit there and say nothing at all. I think that I would have liked to bridge the chasm between us, but I find myself peering at the edge. Maybe once I would have wanted to see what was waiting for me on the other side, but now I stand and stare.

I wanted to tell a funny story here, and ask you, *do you remember?* I know you don't. Your memory is fallible only when it conveniences you, and truthfully, I can't find myself remembering a time where we had fun together. Our memories are the same that way, finicky and selective. My father tells me a lot of stories about you to make up for it. About your life, about your wishes, about your childhood, about your interests. I find myself wishing that maybe you cared enough

to tell me yourself. I asked him if you would ever tell me any stories like he does, and he told me that you simply didn't care enough to try. *It was too difficult.* I thought that maybe that would hurt me more than it did, but I had a sort of understanding with that mentality.

Everything I know about you, every memory, is second-hand, and distorted in some sort of way. I once asked my father if you ever loved me. He assured me that you do, that you love me more than anything in the world. I asked him again, but asked if you ever liked my personality, my disposition. He told me you didn't. Up until that moment, I was so afraid of examining that I was the one that also failed, but in his brazen admittance, I reached absolution. It felt as if I was released from the burden of trying to make sense of you, of trying to get you to like me. Maybe a relationship between a mother and her daughter shouldn't quite feel that way. Looking back, it was the time that I resolved myself into this lonely existence of never quite reaching you. I would have to make peace with that, or at least reach a plane of apathy, but I know that it isn't in my nature to do that.

I have a lot of secrets, and I know that you do too. If I could catch a glimpse of one secret from you, of one emotion left unearthed, of one hope or of one dream, I will leave you be. I will hold your dream in my hands, and I will simply watch it. Then I can give up on you. Then I can release you from my grip, from the tentative hope that maybe you will look at me and find something worth trying for. Until then, I will keep staring at the edge of the chasm and I will wait for you to tell me a story.

Regards,

Maggie Chen.