

Dear mother,

When I was young I would spend my Saturdays writing by a tree with yellow leaves. Her name was Helena. I would chart her growth, press her leaves, ask for permission. From there I'd walk along your arm, mother, until I reached a hill sprouting gravestones above town.

Now I am older, hardly any wiser. I see your branches, your heights, your green-and-orange sadness. The world feels cold. But you write to me still: the forsythia comes in the mail. In town, the blue flowers at my feet erupt into stars. I pick a few, ask for permission.

And sometimes, when you're sleeping, I go out and see Helena. We wrap our arms around each other. We stare down at the sloping earth before us and dream for a while.

Love,
Jenny