

The Messenger

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The Gifts

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The Gifts

We were all still children, young enough so that the four of us could play together. The resort our family was staying at again that summer had a pool we were swimming in. One of the other guests was an old man who delighted in watching us, as energetic youth never fails to delight older people. We rarely talked, but he was happy in simply observing.

This day was sweltering, and no hint of clouds provided relief from the burning sun. We were happily letting the cold water do the job when we noticed the old man slowly approaching. In his hands were four vanilla ice cream cones. The heat of the midday sun had taken its toll and his hands were covered with lines of white ice cream. But his face was radiant as he delivered the gifts. We awkwardly accepted and started concentrating on controlling the liquifying messes. As I ate, I pondered some thoughts which had unexpectedly come into my mind.

The drugstore from which he had undoubtedly bought the ice cream was just around the corner, but what if his slow pace and the hot sun had not agreed, and the ice cream had completely melted? What would he have done then? Or, upon returning, what if he had found us gone? Summer is an impulsive time, and we could have easily decided to leave for the beach, or escape inside for lunch. What then? Instead of simply enjoying the treat, I could not block out the thought of his face upon finding his gifts unpresentable, or upon finding no one to present them to. My heart leaped in wonder that the moment did in fact occur, and with the realization of the fragility of such moments.

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