

Sarah Turmail

With Love, Steve

Make sure the envelope matches the card,
my dad sighs with a guttural cough,
meaning he is in the barn, his flip phone pressed
to his ear, hands on some chipping gate
or an eighty gallon water trough. On my mother's
birthday, like a head butler, I am sent
to the dollar store with a twenty pulled from wadded
bills that live in an overall front pocket.
I am to scour for the most endearing calligraphy
with processed pinks, titled *To My Wife*,
something I do not have. I drive in with
the consolation prize of McDonald's won
with the change, thinking of stale dollar store air,
and stale McChickens, ranch only. I look
for some last minute love, printed and sold
for a dollar and some change, matching envelope
included. And sometimes I even sign it for him,
with my block letters of my botched generation,
clearly an imposter of his quick, dark slashes
of historic cursive made always with ink,
shaming the water color of my pencil.
Go ahead and sign it, I got a cow having trouble
calving. And so I wipe the French fry shine
from my left hand, but the drag of my wrist against
the written lead leaves smears that can't say how
much he wanted that dollar and a half card to tell
her everything he wished he felt in his powder heart.