

Envelopes

after the series Dear Stranger by Shizuka Yokomizo

*“I will NOT knock on your door to meet you.
We will remain strangers to each other”*

Shizuka Yokomizo

I.

Come in and talk, stranger... But it is important that you know
how in my mind, there is a single room where no one else can go.

II.

Stranger, I more often think of those never born, rather than the victors.
These ghosts, they far outweigh us — these shadows in our pictures.

III.

I need not look far for someone I do not know.
I'll read back on the stranger writing in my diary, several years ago.

IV.

Your camera, stranger, will be outside throughout this night.
As will my eye upon it. Which one is right?

V.

Right now to someone else, stranger, you are a scent, a smile, a laugh;
then in time only a memory in passing; then just a photograph.

VI.

Knowledge is the greatest stranger, always arriving apropos —
the more we know, the more we know we'll never know.

VII.

Nostalgia is our *closest* stranger, the rest we happily revise.
How odd we never doubt nor edit the *perfect* recall in those lies.

VIII.

Hate arrives in caustic letters, stranger, and the culpable offender
sends it only to themselves, and with just one note; *return to sender*.

IX.

I no longer know you, stranger, which I've long ceased adjusting to
but what went unsaid between us, is the stranger I've become accustomed to.

X.

Our growth measured in distance, not time — that's the only lesson.
Stranger, you can't imagine how far, to you, I've travelled from that other person.

XI.

Who is to be less trusted, the stranger selling wisdom from the booth
or that stranger *within* the patron who just bought it all as truth?

XII.

What damage would be done in hearing what all other strangers thought?
Merciful to neurosis? Thank god those doors are locked.

XIII.

Dear stranger who reads these words when my life is long past over.
Yes, you never knew me, but stranger, you got *closer*.