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WHEN A PHOTOGRAPH ARRIVES BY MAIL

If executed with care, forward and back might elicit a structure
in which coming to know her could take place along the mobius strip
of withdrawal, backstepping into the original position &
mirroring wonder without its usual trappings
of aura and glint

yet nevertheless & at once something luminous and familiar
as the girl reached down so many sandals ago and carved herself into
memory
as one reads of Kafka and his mother
staring into one another's eyes

as all assumptions falter and one face appears identical to the other
& comes to be by approaching a state of profound stillness
and enabling someone, almost anyone, to adopt comparative features,

as when a photograph arrives and seems familiar,
endlessly intriguing and mistakenly sent off too quickly
to the wrong viewer puzzling over the reminder of an intimacy
arrived at by structures in place long since.

the photograph is the advent of myself as another
—Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*