

A letter home after all these years.

I don't know if you know (I have been trying to keep it from you) but a friend of mine, his father, knew Perry Como when he was a barber, mother.

I knew you'd be amazed.

Major Lance and Ottis Redding are on my record player, and Little Stevie Wonder sings me to sleep (the same record player you gave me when I graduated from college, even though father didn't think I deserved a gift, and it still works fine).

I knew you'd be dismayed, all in all.

Once the time comes, I suppose, I'll listen with dripping melancholy when my son and daughter tell me that the Zero Zephyrs zing their ears (having met, when younger, a friend whose friend lived next door to where the pilot of the plane in which Ottis Redding crashed lived).

I knew you'd sympathize.

So let me be the Perry Como of your heart, mother, and I'll think of you as Patty and the Blue Bells. All things considered, it's the best we can do (waltz and bugaloo).

What she said & what she saw

Faced with such common objects,
a fork, a spoon, a dish,
two chairs and a ball of twine,
it is no wonder she fell dumb.
Nothing around her spoke:
why should she?

When her husband came home that night,
he, of course, tried to bring her to words.
"Dinner!" he cried, "Groceries!
Dresses! Mmmmm. Mowing the lawn!"
From what he said
she only judged
that it was to her credit
that she could not speak.

That was two years ago:
since then, stores and houses
and clocks and sinks,
all these and more
have passed her eyes
though she could not name a one.