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Call From The Past

by Richard Lewis

The red light flashed impatiently.

“Hey you! There’s a message, sounds important,” it urged.

I pressed the button, releasing the captured voice and was astonished to hear your soothing tones. Familiar still, after all this time. Holding my breath I dialled the number given but kept getting the same reply.

“Sorry this number is unavailable.”

With no number or email address, I decided to go old school and reached for the timeworn Parker, passed down by my father. The pen had not seen the light of day for years, locked away in its case but holding it again gave me a strange sensation. It seemed grateful for the attention and as if wanting to direct me, I heard this voice:

“No need to squeeze me so tightly, relax and let me do the writing.”

“My god,” I gasped, almost dropping the pen. Feeling unnerved I nearly put it back in its case but I couldn’t see it shut away in the darkness again, so after replenishing the ink, we started to write.

The Parker had a life of its own, forming sentences and leading my hand over the waiting paper. Words fell onto the page as if torn from my thoughts. Out they tumbled, one leaning into the next, blue stain on velum. The Parker, happy to be usefully employed, called out again.

“I’m going to make the most of this, every word has to count.”

As my hand was drawn across the page the lines spoke your name and I told myself, 'this is not a letter but my arms around you for just one brief moment'.

My feelings flowed like silent prayer. As if flying out to reach you, over continents, across oceans, bridging the withering years. I remembered your tender touch, those lips pressed against mine and the way we wrapped around each other in that aching, ageless dance.

But that was half a lifetime ago.

The message had said, "we must meet again, even for just one last time," but now I wondered, would we even recognise each other, we are not the same people.

Would the image of the person I'd held so close to my heart be shattered like breaking glass? Uncertain now, my hand slowed and the Parker seemed to lose interest.

Words came to a full stop, as the ink in me ran dry.