

The Missing Poem

Emily Bounds

It isn't so much that I *miss* you.
It's that you are missing from me,
As they say in French.
Present tense, because it's constant.
Not me, but you doing the action of missing, because I am patient.

Many moments a day, *tu me manques*.
Many a small detail reminds me
That you are in the current state
Of missing from me.

When I listen to a hymn,
When I drive past a pretty blue house,
When I play piano in the air,
At least once in every prayer I say,

When I'm speaking French,
When I read certain verses,
When your mother sends me letters,
As I try to forget you haven't sent one,

When I color in the book we shared,
When I'm between dreaming and waking,
When I read Shel Silverstein,
When I drink chamomile tea with honey,

When any of our places come up in conversation, like Biloxi, Alaska,
Georgia, and Springfield, of course,
Mostly your California,

When I take a nap with that giant bear,
When someone asks if I'm ticklish,
When any of those songs play,
As I remember and hum along,

When *Godzilla* happens to be on TV,
When I'm scrolling through my photos,
When someone orders a calzone,
When I run daily to the mailbox.



But the most important moments
Happen when I picture you:
In your mountains and rivers,
In front of listening travelers,
With your guitar in hand,
With truth pouring from your heart,

And I am glad for the miles that separate.
Because all the joy, all the good,
All the teaching, all the wandering
And the wondering that you do
Could not be done at all
If you were not missing from me.

