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# Encountering Care

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*To Alfred*

Silently observing gestures, mimics,
Inhaling words, so carefully chosen,
admiringly watching them develop into thoughts and theory

Hesitant to speak—in awe
of this one-sided, yet lasting encounter
in a graduate seminar.

A decade later,
A critical remark in the margins,
A humorous comment on favorite words so frequently used,
A gentle encouragement,
A word that counts, a word that matters, a word that encourages.

Impatient to ask—in curious expectation
In this mutual encounter, lasting, of course,
In Conversation with a Mentor.

Encounters unfolding in heart and mind,
Reverberating in research,
Reappearing in word and thought,
Reentering the classroom.

Encounters that speak of sincerity,
and caring interest,
of thoughtfulness and belief.

Encounters of continuity,
of enduring and inspiring enthusiasm
committed to research and to supporting others.

Encounters that shape—intellectually and personally.

A form of care.