FLASH NONFICTION

The Goldfish and the Boy

by Chun Yu □□



"Going Home" by Sonal Goorha

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It was July 4th. I was at a party in a California garden overlooking the Pacific. Boys, loud and strong, waved nets, chasing goldfish in a small pond. One fish struggled to escape, bruised, dragging a swollen eye.

A quiet little boy sat beside me, sunlight on his golden hair.

After the bigger boys had left, he whispered, “It hurts me to see him like this.”

A tenderness swept through me — sudden and unguarded.

“My daddy died,” he said softly.

“Oh… I’m so sorry…” I was unprepared.

“He was 27. It was a ski accident.” His blue eyes, innocent and open, met mine. “My baby sister never met him.”

“I’m really sorry…” I touched his shoulder.

After a long pause, he asked, “Will he get better?”

“He will. It takes time… You will feel better, too, one day,” I assured him, summoning what confidence I could. We gazed at the ocean I had crossed.

When the party ended, the hostess, almost apologetically, gave the boy the injured goldfish in a bag of water. He carried it into the night, following his mother, who held the baby.

Outside, all the fireworks had fallen into the dark ocean.

I still see them — the boy and the fish — swimming toward a distant light, a star blinking above.

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