

## **A Love of Strangers**

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One day I took a walk I will never forget. I was in Brooklyn, passing through Boerum Hill in the direction of downtown. It was one of those glorious spring mornings where the trees are enchanted and every flower is cheerful and sweet-smelling. I was headed towards a café whose name I have long since forgotten— but the miracle took place outside its front door.

Beneath the shade of a tree, in a special dappled light, two women were talking, and a child sat astride a red and blue tricycle. As the women conversed they smiled at each other, and the child— a little boy of perhaps two or three —padded his tiny feet on the ground to push himself up over the bare roots. Then another person appeared; the mail man. He was large, yet light on his feet: you couldn't miss the spring in his step as he went up and down the stoops.

This scene might have gone unnoticed, but I looked on, amazed, seeing four gods standing beneath the sky. Everything about them expressed magnificence, and for the first time, in an instant, I realized an invisible web, and that no-one— and nothing —fell outside its influence.

How could there be even a hairsbreadth between us?

I didn't speak what I had seen: what could I have said? Yet for days, in those quiet moments before sleep, and in the quietness of the morning when I had just woken, I was caught in the spell of that scene from real life, that moment that seemed to speak to every moment. Years later, as the memory has dimmed, it has also lingered— you might even say it has changed my life.