

## To the One Who Gave Me Life

Dear Mom,

There was a time when the pain was so loud I couldn't hear anything else. Your voice, your intentions, even your love—it all got lost in the static of what I thought you should have been, and what I believed you failed to give me. For years, I carried that pain like it was my identity, using it as fuel, as proof, and as an excuse.

But something has changed. Slowly, over time—and by grace more than effort—I've begun to see myself more clearly. And in doing so, I've started to see you differently too.

You were young. You were scared. And you were trying to survive with the tools you had. I don't pretend to know your whole story, and I won't gloss over the damage—I still carry it—but I no longer want to carry it like a weapon.

I've done things I swore I never would. I've become someone I didn't recognize. And if I've learned anything through recovery, it's that none of us are just our worst moments. I've failed people too. I've lashed out. I've shut down. I've run away from what scared me, and I've tried to fill the hollow places with everything but love.

I can't go back and relive my childhood with the understanding I have now. But I can say this: I forgive you. Not because it fixes everything. Not because the pain wasn't real. But because I am finally beginning to see how much I need forgiveness too.

I'm still learning how to love. And this letter is part of that.

Thank you for giving me life. Thank you for your imperfections. And thank you—God willing—for being willing to receive this letter in the spirit it's written.

With hope,  
[Name Redacted]