Strawberry moon

swimming in the bay and rope swing

meals out on the deck

girls scampering around the playroom and up and down the stairs

Great run around town with Helena in the baby jogger

wonderful beach run to the cowpath and the old bluff road

seeing animals -- bald eagle, chipmunks, deer, crayfish

nature activities-- hiking cowpath and old bluff road, hiking Days River, crayfishing at the Old Dutch Mill, swimming in the bay, kayaking

playing with Buckman's puppy Gus

road stops -- park in Marinette-- goose feathers and green lawns and pizza pastie, Port Washington for ice cream and shore walking and stare climbing

Dearest Caleb,

Grandfather Swift here. You may not know me, but I am a trans-dimensional traveling interstellar being. And knowing many, many things about this expansive and expanding universe it has *come to my attention that* you have recently celebrated a very important rotation around the sun. And now while to your earth time this letter may seem to be reaching you quite late, I would like to insist, potentially irrationally, though also potentially completely within the bounds of non-irrationality, as dictated by the complex physics and space-time continuum conundrums that one runs aground upon from time to time while zipping hither and thither throughout our shared universe at brisk clip of whitelight, that my words are actually reaching you quite prematurely. Early even. I apologize for this, but pre-emptive punctuality has at some point truly become a deeply ingrained habit of mine. That all said, I must admit that as I am currently graphite-smithing this missive on the great mahogany anvil of my good desk aboard my gleaming interstellar spacecraft the *Araphanid*, whizzing through the vacuum of space at an inconceivable speed, the actual date, of the here and now, is really quite subjective. And like so many facts, quite up for debate.

And at any rate, that fact that you are even reading this must be admitted as a minor miracle, that with the chaotic state of our *Galactic Postal System* (GPS). As we both know, the GPS has been in such a sorry start these past few eons. It really hasn’t been the same since those the wild *Space Shuttle Express* days when the gallant *Postranaughts* would race galaxy to galaxy, hoping a fresh *Space Pony* at each reached port. I blame bureaucracy (and of course video games, as so many of our would-be *Postranaughts* no longer even apply to the GPS academy and instead remain at home in their Personal Homeplace Pods tapping away at their handscreens crushing candy or pacifying upset birds or whatever gizmo games the kids are into these days.

At any rate, you will notice the stamps and marks and emblems on your envelope of all the Space Ports visited by your letter on its journey. If it has more than three, it likely means that your letter was lost for a while, or as they say in the intergalactic parcel business *rerouted*.

Well, at any rate we think it is very special that you are celebrating such a significant birthspan and in at least in my humble Zorobian opinion we have really *blown out all the stops* and put together some pretty great festivities for you. My apologies that due to the whole inconvenient of the space-time continuum, and the pernicious Divoc-91 outbreak in sector G12 of the Baraxian System, you will not be able to attend your own celebrations in person. I am hopeful though that my descriptions of the following events will provide you with at least a taste of the galactically epic extravaganza that is and will continue to go on for at least the next couple of millennia in honor of you.

As tradition dictates, we will be kicking off the celebrations with the ceremonial dumping of *10,000,000* gallons of Boraxian sparkling stewed juice into the *Blackhole of Caldonia.* This effervescent stew, a fermented beverage from the Loraxian System while universally beloved for just such an occasion, though never to actually to consumed— it tastes dreadful!!— was generously donated with wholehearted gusto by the *Galactic Council of Book Dwelling Worms*.

Next the infamous *Coordinated Breptacocks of Staxrock Orbit* will be strutting their stuff in a zero-gravity presentation of their *Collapse of the Small Red Dwarf*. A truly breathtaking, if slightly melodramatic and mawkish, reenactment of the life cycle of some very specific, though rather small, Red Dwarf in some very specific sector of the galaxy— my apologies, the exact specific Red dwarf are momentarily eluding me. Honestly, when you have been around as long as I have all of those collapsing stars, at some point, begin to run together…

Now, as my cousin, Zagmore, just had to get involved— and you know what a pyromaniac he is— we will be exploding 65 stars in the *Vermillionary Sector* for you. I am told it should be quite the show as most planets in this sector possess a solid core of colored sand, and therefore if you pop them off in just the right order of co-explosions that whole old black, boring vacuum of space will suddenly burst and blossom forth into all the pageantry and bubbly excitement of a backalley in Calcutta during Holi. That is, if Zagmore can get the timing of his detonations just right. No promises.

Reggie, an old artist friend of mine, has been working night and day on spelling out your initials in the night sky over your earth using only preexisting starlight. He claims that from your house if you look due south around 9:00 p.m. from late August until the 23rd of September you should be able to just make out his handiwork in the sky. If you are familiar with Reggie’s past pieces you will know that his craft solidly grounds itself in the ancient art-practice of *Connect-the-Dots*. That said, his work with designing these “Constellations” has sometimes been met with controversy in some quarters. While some lavishly praise his creativity and learning, others have levied the perhaps not entirely unfair criticism that his work can be a little subjective and a even bit hard to follow. For example, where some see a representation of the great mythical hunter Orion, one of Reggie’s very classic pieces, other people seem to only see a few random white dots against an enigmatically black background. That said, I bet if you look south from your home, at just the right time, and use some of the creative imagination, that I know you are surfeit with, you should just be able to trace out your initials somewhere out there in the starsea. As Reggie does not sign his work, I wanted to be sure to let you know who was behind this grand and creative gesture.

And lastly, for the grand finale*, the Broothmordians* are planning on slithering out of their brackish, acid-bath sea on *Broothmuda*, where the whole million odd mess of them will fully reconstitute in their physical forms for the first time in three millennia. They will then dance to an up-tempo horn driven funk-tune while gesticulating with their flabby pointer phalanges towards their sky and beyond towards your earth and your Washington D.C., to express that, *“Hey, we fully reconstituted and are “dancing” for YOU, Caleb P. Whitmer, and we feel joyful about this celebration of your life.”* While each of their three quivering hearts will be literally dripping with all manner of earnestness and sincerity, I am thankful that you will not need to witness this spectacle from anywhere nearer than your mind’s eye, as they are truly a putrid smelling lot and actually quite poisonous. Just a little whiff of their fumes and most humans lose consciousness for at least several earth seasons. It’s bad. Their dancing though. Talk about rhythm!

Well, that just about raps it up. You are so loved and appreciated by those around you, I realize that all of this hullaboo is rather unnecessary, but sometimes, and I think you would agree, that words are not always quite enough. And when words fail to fully express the depths of our feeling we simply sometimes need to fall back on grand gestures and colorful exploding plants and mellodramic operas and subjective art and, you know, *Broothmordian* “dancing”.

Happy, happy 30th!!!!!!

With all my love,

Grandfather Swift