

## a thank-you

I have a friend. I can say just about anything to her. I call her when I want a few minutes of comfortable company, and I call her when things are so bad that I feel like getting in my car and driving as far away as I can. She knows me so well that one look from across a crowded room reminds me that all is well. She guards my secrets like the royal treasure, and the only secrets she keeps from me are other people's. She makes me laugh. She tells me when I'm about to make a bad decision. She talks me off the ledge when I'm about to quit, and somehow at the same time she talks me into being a better person than I ever thought I could be, because most of the time she can see that better person a lot better than I can. When I feel like things will be black forever, she reminds me that there were new sprouts of hope just a few short weeks ago. She calls when I'm too sad to talk, and she reminds me that I still have a friend, even though I've lost one, too. She grounds me. She keeps me in the race and makes me want to run my best time, no matter how badly I messed things up yesterday. She helps me see the lies and ignore them. When the low road looks easy, she reminds me that it's only easy in the short run. She's glad when I do well and when I look good and when I'm glad. Sometimes she calls me just to hear my voice, because it makes her world feel more solid, too. And when I don't call as much as she does, she keeps calling anyway, because she never keeps score. She remembers things I did and said so many years ago that even I can't remember them. She has my back.

She's a lot like home. I can relax and be myself with her. I don't have to make an effort. I can put my feet up and change into my old clothes and breathe a sigh of relief. Sometimes I take home for granted, and sometimes I take her for granted, but not today. Today I'm stopping to say thank-you.