

'Identity Papers'
Ian Seed

Back in the country where I used to live as a very young man, I went to visit the house where I'd once rented a room. A dowdy-looking woman answered the door. It was only when I noticed the tiny mole on her nose that I realised she was the pretty girl who used to play in the hallway.

She had no idea who I was. I took out my yellowed ID papers, showed her the ancient photo of my face with the local police stamp on it. Still she was hesitant. I reminded her of how she used to tease me because of the way I spoke their language. A smile flickered across her face. There was a letter still waiting for me, she said, tucked away in the back of a drawer somewhere. It must have arrived shortly after I left all those years ago. She went to look for it while I waited on the step.

When she returned, I was surprised at how untouched the envelope looked. I recognized the handwriting on the front as my father's. I started to open it, forgetting it was too late to reply.