



LOOKING OVER A TALL SODDEN UNCROSSABLE FENCE

BY: [JULIE HERSH \(HTTP://COLDNOON.COM/AUTHOR/JULIE-HERSH/\)](http://coldnoon.com/author/julie-hersh/) ON: MARCH 31, 2017

IVANGOROD/NARVA

Looking at Russia from here reminds me of something.
It is a little like sitting next to you on a bed
in a room full of people. I can stare at you as much as I want
(and I do), and sometimes you'll look back
(not much), but even if our legs touch at the thighs
there is a big fucking gap between us.
Here there is a river
you could probably walk over, and on the other side you'd be in
Ivangorod, which is supposedly
blighted and cold and bad: city wasteland,
buildings full of apartments
with pipes not hidden behind walls, dirt stains.
Not much grass, more just paths with a plank of wood.
I am Ivangorod and you are Narva.

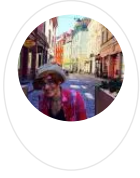
I'll take the old cars, the worse fishing poles,
the fish who dream of stretching one fin over the invisible line in the water
(but what fish would leave Russia).
You can have the one with the white stone paths,
the one who cleans up at night and puts on a new blue dress.
I'll be the one who wants to be a part of you.
You'll be the one who looks over a tall sodden uncrossable fence and
comes over for the day to buy something
cheap, something only a real empire could make.

SOOMAA NATIONAL PARK

It was soft water that I held in my hands.
It was unkind water that showed up
black and dotted on my fingers,
showing each bit of wrong on me.
Each dirt that had been there, without.
It was soft and cold like the skin of a bear,
snow covered from the inside out.
It was oily wet, herbed like butter.
It was deep like the inside of a deep earth.
Like a mountain upside down,
mountain insides leaking,
mountain blood soaking through.
Colored grey and blue like a purple hazy plant
without its green on it.
Like a streaming flow of silver creatures
that live on and under one another
living and biting and eating and praying.
A ground that will never be found
somewhere down in the bottom of the earth's mind.
A cold way to live.

It was unkind water that I held in my hands.
A place where if you fall in you die
and then after you die you breathe water
and turn cold and old with life all streaming from you,
growing hard over your skin,
your lungs a new delicacy to be tasted.
Your claws part of a new community below the air.
Ducks with their feathers keeping their organs warm,
and outside the rubber-grey skin of a flipper.
Faces without faces, with too many eyes,
with one mouth for each thing I want to say to you.
A face covered with mouths each one for you.
Each eye my own eye but stuck with a needle
and drawn out to give to you.
Keep my eyes with you,
hold them out in your palms and don't squeeze.

From the water I go with you,
from my cold dark wishes I follow you,
from inside me.



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