

Coastlines: An Intimate Lesson in Geography and Geopolitical Affairs

I. The Fool

The obnoxious dictator-to-be and his investor dance on stage with cheese on their heads to the sound of war drums played by an unwilling band.

They are saying they want to take over your land in a concert of atrocities.

I scream at them in protest, 'No, you can't have that!'

But no sound comes out.

From a quiet observer, I erupt into power that spills over the crowd, and I levitate off the ground and shout, 'Kalaallit Nunaat! Kalaallit Nunaat!'

I remember you whispered that one night.

The red-faced crowd malfunctions at information they don't understand, until someone presses play, and they return to their comforting, hateful chant.

One of them shoots me down.

I'm being carried out by men in black and tasteless sunglasses and thrown into the darkness of another dream I can't remember.

They say, 'Stay out, stay clear, you have no right to be here. '

I shout, 'I loved a man from Greenland!'

'Kalaallit Nunaat.'

II. The Hermit

Did I tell you that I first dreamt of Greenland before I met you?

It was a few weeks before I would move to Spain.

I was sitting alone on a frozen beach in summer clothes.

Everything was white, but it wasn't cold at all.

I was there for some mission,

I didn't have much information on.

I was staring into the grey mist, waiting for something.

*Then I found myself inside a
mobile home, gazing at the same white
landscape, now framed by a wide
window.*

*Out of nowhere, a crow flew in,
knocking frantically on the glass with its
beak.*

*I couldn't understand its creaks, whether it wanted to
go out or was warning me to 'Look out!'*

I remembered that dream during lockdown.

The pandemic hit shortly after I moved to my apartment in Madrid, where we would later meet. I spent a lot of time those days studying the flight of birds through the balustrades of my balcony, wondering how I found myself in a cage, longing to be a pigeon.

I look up the symbolism of white in dreams.

White = *A white stage, a blank slate. New beginnings ahead.*

I am waiting for something.

III. The Lovers

When we meet, we still wear masks to enter restaurants. We are stepping out of the ruins of our previous lives—paper houses that collapsed with a sneeze.

I am writing to say you will recognise me as 'the girl with the vintage haircut', and I will find you waiting by the station on a Sunday, at noon.

I don't expect much, so I'm surprised when you smile, and it feels like sunshine.

You are taller than I expected, and beautiful.

Dark hair, blue eyes, as if I made you up.

You remind me of someone.

We walk around the city, talking endlessly about the world and where we are from—though if we trust your recollection, I talk endlessly and you listen patiently. We pause at every plaza for a drink like bees on wildflowers, and discover a delicious Italian wine with an unpronounceable German name.

We thought it would be difficult, but it was so easy to fall in love, seamlessly, as if at once, picking each other up and putting our pieces together. Two islanders from faraway lands, worlds so different yet mirrored.

You grew up on the biggest island in the world; pure, cold, and untouched, one the colonisers misnamed the Green Land when it was all white with ice, and I, on the biggest island in the Mediterranean, sun-scorched and raped by a dozen invaders and conflicts of interest.

You were formed by white rolling hills and the echoes of snow dogs howling in the wind. I was shaped by the shadows of olive trees and the smell of jasmine in the breeze. The seas of our childhoods carved the coastlines of our minds. We both felt tied to the landscape but misfits in the crowds, so we looked to the blue horizon and dreamt big dreams, more noise, and of becoming important.

We found ourselves somewhere in between, in a city that's purple when it rains and golden as the Sun falls, waving the gold-and-red flag of its soul every sunset. We speak to each other in a borrowed language that feels more ours than our mother tongues—a second language

in a third country. You want to make me a *tortilla de patata*, to show me how well you've assimilated into the local culture.

We bond over our love for history, *Empire of the Sun*, and *Band of Brothers*. We take our first trip to France for the D-Day Festival. We dress in vintage clothes because we love old things made with craft, and we dance to jazz in the streets of Carentan, under strings of colourful flags that remind us of a time when everything fell into place. Some Belgians in the street asked us where we were from. I gesture with Mediterranean flair, pointing at an invisible atlas, how we came from distant edges of the world, met in Spain, and now walk together on the beaches of Normandy, my fingers leaving a heart-shaped trail, visible only in memory.

We get caught later that evening in a compromising position, in the chateau where we stay the night, when a shocked man opens the door to the wrong room. I scream, "What the hell?!" — naked — but we laugh and make that the tagline of our love story. An unlearned lesson on setting boundaries and locking the doors, which would eventually tear us apart.

War movies will become less 'romantic' in a few months, when a real war erupts in Ukraine.

You'll say you want to go fight, and I'll tell you you're insane, but if you go, I'll go too.

We won't go. You'll wear your dog tag around your neck to work, wishing you could do more.

One night, you wake up distressed, repeating hoarsely, 'Kalaallit Nunaat'.

You say you were back home, fighting in the snow.

I ask you what it means.

You say it's the indigenous name for Greenland, and it means *Land of its People*.

I say that's beautiful, and it sounds like *Καληνύχτα (Kaliníhta)*, which is how we say goodnight in Greek.

From that night on, you'll say 'Καληνύχτα' to me before bed,

And I'll say 'Godnat',

You'll say 'Sov godt',

I'll say, 'Sleep tight.'

We'll exchange languages interweaving our identities, wanting to make one of our own, slowly, and with care, as we like things to be made, like a bespoke suit, or a vintage fountain pen, or those 60s fridges that look like cars that never break.

I learn the texture of your skin, memorise the coordinates of the sun spot on your cheek, and you tease me about my Greek nose when I complain about its rough edges. You say you wish you could make it bigger. You say the roughness makes my softness all the more devastating.

We are tracing each other's bodies to make a map home.

Home = *A place that welcomes love for coffee and warm conversation.*

I love you most each time you get soft and tear up about simple and important things, or when you drift away on the couch while I pass my fingers through your hair. You smile like a

little boy, mumbling gibberish half-asleep, imagining we're having a conversation. I turn it into stories, and we laugh about them in the morning.

You say I feel like home.

I ask you if you miss it.

IV. Death

You tell me a story that keeps breaking my heart—the story you said you hadn't shared with anyone else.

The story of when you saw Mikael, your friend, dead on a hospital bed—his red puffer jacket so red against his pale white skin. He was still wearing his boots and his ski pants, only tiny drops of blood staining his torn Nirvana sweatshirt, the rest left on the snow. You couldn't understand how he could die from that tiny gash on his head, killed by his birthday present, the snowmobile you were all racing on the day before, on the hills of your childhood.

They just left him there, soulless in the corridor, waiting for his parents. But for some reason, you got there first, alone as you often were in times like these.

You told me Mikael was 'a hybrid' like you, of a Greenlandic mother and a Danish father, never allowed to fully claim either identity. I don't think you know that a part of you died with Mikael. A mirror that broke, another version of you that stayed in Greenland forever, buried under soft, warm snow.

Your parents sent you away that same year to Denmark—another homeland that didn't quite feel like home—to protect you, they thought, from the death all around you, from the drugs and alcohol, from the betrayals they tried to hide, from the whispers of the *Aurora Borealis*.

'Men don't live long in Greenland, ' you would say, but you long to go back.

You long to return to those views of frozen beaches, to noons that felt like nights, to ancient whales carrying secrets towards the endless horizon, to colourful homes of people you knew adorning each hill, framed by your living room window on a cold Christmas Eve.

I picture you each time, that day you died with Mikael. Your sweet, handsome face blushed from coming in from the cold, looking at him with wet eyes and maybe a smile, unable to handle the emotion. You hid it away, saved it, and shared it with me because maybe I remind you of him, of the boy you were in Greenland.

You've been looking for him ever since.

I tell you to go home to find that piece, and you say you don't want to go alone. Maybe you're scared that it might kill you, that you were Mikael all along, and going back will make you disappear. I say I'll come and I'll be holding your hand, so you know you're real.

You say you want to take the kids there if anything goes wrong in the world.

Your safe place, your Last Frontier.

V. The Tower

I miss how heavy you felt lying next to me, how soft. I had been unmoored for so long, I wished you could have been my anchor. But we don't make it in the end. We realise we are building sandcastles in the snow, in the middle of a storm. We are unable to defend our coastlines.

I am trying to let you go, but I keep dreaming of your home.

And I am looking for hope in words, dreams, and tarot cards, sourcing meaning from destruction.

I learn from the tarot that death means rebirth, and nothing ends at endings.

I learn from dreams that we are all tied by thin air and quantum cords.

I learn from the news that the world is broken, walking on thin ice.

VI. The World (In Reverse)

The American president and his arrogant vice president are screaming on TV that they will 'acquire' your land 'at all costs,' among other atrocities.

My sister just sent me a video from a hill in the park near our house in Cyprus.

You can see the sea from there, but all she can see are lights in the sky—Iranian missiles raining over Israel and blowing up before they hit the ground, while the ground shatters on the other side, in Gaza and Beirut. She's getting married in a few weeks, and she's scared.

Breaking News notifications beep like a time bomb, and I check to see which country is next and how close we are to Midnight.

This is not a dream.

All I can think of are airports, ports, and bombs, and how close they are to our hometowns.

And then I think about you.

I am sitting on a beach wanting to write to you, but there's sand in my pen.

I see driftwood in the water, and fear it might be someone's child. Broken and floating for miles.

I wonder if you've already assembled your EU-approved survival kit.

I want to ask you what you're putting in it, as if we're packing for another trip where we can be alone and uninterrupted.

Will you come pick me up if the world begins to end again?

Where will we go if the enemy has reached the final frontier?

In my dreams, I keep looking for you in Greenland, so I can let you go, but somewhere safe.

In others, I'm building us a home.

VII. Oracle Card: Broken Arrow

I learn from Native American history that something broken is not always a bad thing.

Did you know that a broken arrow is a harbinger of peace?

Sometimes things break to release.

VIII. The Wheel of Fortune

I dream that we are on a white beach.

A beautiful, comfortable bay.

You are wearing red swimming shorts, and I, a red beret.

We are climbing white cliffs and leaping into the water.

Fearless. Graceful.

In the middle of it all,

floating over the lake, there

is a black obsidian rock.

(Full of mystery but no darkness.)

We know somehow that it's an entity from another world,

observing, balancing.

Waiting for something.

You rise like a Kryptonian to meet it;

*I rise on the other side, knowing. I extend
my hand to yours, and we hold hands around it in
a final Pas de deux.*

Black obsidian = *A protective and grounding stone, helping to clear blockages and
release emotional and spiritual burdens.*

*I dream that
We've built a house on an island in the middle of streets with no names.
We are making a tortilla de patata.
We are claiming our land with a white flag.
Kalaallit Nunaat.*

‘Καληνύχτα’

‘Godnat.’

‘Sov godt.’

‘Sleep tight.’