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SPECIAL THANKS

to Escher McDonell for creatures

to nekosattva for shedded selves

to vape escapist for new threads

to Amara Reyes for the arrived

to baroquepiral to tell the vision

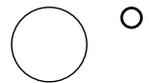
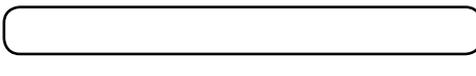
to tsumaran_chan for sake and world

to epou for the name

and countless others including the one who sees this

LVCIG121 2'
 AEF LVCIG121
 TUCN2 LVCIG121
 VCCNWSM AEF
 WPECENW2 TUCN2
 AINERBV VCCNWSM
 COMMOD WPECENW2
 W12N2 AINERBV
 ERVADU COMMOD
 NGLNICE2 W12N2
 S2E ERVADU
 SWSLEND1 NGLNICE2
 1B2M S2E
 0N12 SWSLEND1
 VGL0N0 1B2M
 W0EN0 0N12
 D0R0VE VGL0N0
 EI W0EN0
 T0R0VE D0R0VE
 W1 N1 EI
 TWC1D1D0 T0R0VE
 1EM0B W1 N1
 E1N2M0D TWC1D1D0
 2ED D0 1EM0B
 WE EG11' E1N2M0D
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 1N0 WE EG11'
 COM2EC1E VDI12CI
 WME1' 1N0
 211 COM2EC1E
 D0R0V WME1'
 1B2M 211
 T0REN D0R0V
 1B2M
 T0REN





Name: Elon Duraz Rao
 Birthday: _____, 1999
 Sex: Male
 Occupation: full-time Vons Associate
 Likes: open fields, Forgotten weapons, LoL, chilling with homies, louds then mids, game economics
 Dislikes: nothin'
 Blood type: _____
 Seen with: "i used to love going to concerts as a kid. for some reason, id kick and scream and ask my mom for money to buy a t-shirt even if i didn't care so much about the band. then i'd show it off to people at school, even though most people ignored me. there were a couple of people like me though, who were into it. i never really understood people who paid so much for clothes that didn't mean anything, except that they were expensive. what's the point? where's everyone going to so fast?"



by: [nekosattva](#)

RELEASE AS SANITIZED

In the _____, an unremarkable kid with a penchant for Soulfly and Nirvana t-shirts just finished high school. His yearbook quote reads, "I'm _____. Wow, 16 years old already. Time totally flies. I have no idea what comes next, or what I'll do when I graduate. I hope everything that is good in this short life comes to you guys."

_____ 23/17

After graduating he lives with his parents and spends his days delivering mail throughout the village and drinking on the weekends. A blog entry from _____ reads "Holy fuck, I'm bored! I've been staring out of the window for days with nobody passing. What a load of shit, I want some action, something to happen."

Eight years later, the kid _____ sports a bald head and long red beard. He wears a djellaba and looks into the camera with an empty intensity.

“Hi Dad, hi Mom. This is a personal message to you. This message means I am no longer in the _____. I have heeded the call of Allah, revealed in the Qur’an.”

_____ can you deal with this? 10/15

Amid the ruins of _____, the kid, who probably never met a Muslim his entire life growing up, explains how he discovered the Qur’an amid the media-frenzy around the far-right _____ campaign against immigration and Islam. He recalls a particular night, at a party, where he feels disgusted with all around him, wandering around drunk with a total lack of purpose or direction. How the suffocation of the village, the placid security it offered, and the endless cycle of meaningless repetition that gnawed at him started to fall away in the light of the shahada. Soon, a fire starts to burn inside him that leads him to make contact with radical jihadists. Isolated in his bedroom, in between his mail delivery rounds and the increasingly infrequent drinking, the internet opens the door to a world pregnant with meaning

and an intensity he had never encountered before. He starts devouring the works of Sayyid Qutb and severs all contact with his old friends. Finally, he boards a flight to Turkey and travels in secret to the Zone to meet up with operatives of either Jabha Al-Islamia or Jabhat Al-Nusra. In his last video message he mentions he never plans to come home. If he doesn’t become a martyr in _____, if he will see the fall of Al-Assad and the foundation of the Caliphate, he will travel to Iraq to continue down the path of the sword. It is unclear whether the kid is still alive. After his last video message there has been complete radio silence. Whatever his fate, it seems he knows what to do now.

RELEASE AS SANITIZED Aug 23, 2020

Synopsis

natalia wanders the zone populated by paramilitaries, influencers and the children of napalm and static breeding across the desert until even its sands dye into the blue-light glimpsed before artillery fire



Last Time

another shift at the pizza joint for yelena, spending coins at the arcade where a click of the plastic trigger soon blends into the clatters of machinery from trucks entering into the desert as she searches for christine. welcome to the zone.

CW: war, disappearance, death, corpses, nudity, orphanage

What happens then?

I feel myself sprout in a rush of water. I splash onto the rocks, I spill I seep into the cracks. In the fire of heat, I am an outburst of steam. In the chill of nothing, I'm rigid like ice. I'm a vein, a way; I am a means, a vessel. I'm flat like a riverbed. I'm tall like a waterfall. I'm thick, like cotton but like sand to your touch. We've always been two heads of the same dog. My thoughts have always felt incomplete; horrified when I found their end in you.

I reach for my neck. I find that where I expected the smooth, familiar softness thumps instead a coarse bundle of tendons & ligaments. I feel the monstrous, burdensome blood thicken. I am a beast, a machine.

Where do you and I begin? Feel the seams between our bodies; the many colors of our flesh fucking.

3.0

Dark crimson congealed in every crevice. Watered by the aqua vitae of Yangzi and Volga, roots like greedy fingers 'round a jewel. Our time has come. Plant a seed, see if these rivers don't run. Don't wander, lost in your doubts and confusions. I am here

Somehow I can't see what you see, yet I know I see it. Are we two sides of the same coin? Heads, tails; I win. I touch my own body, I feel your stomach rumble next to mine. We are starving. Raise your mighty sword, feel my hand guide yours to his loving head. I sense the tension under your skin

I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff

Our lips may never meet. Yet there's no question that I am you and you are me

We roam the cliffs of rye. Our four swords stained with blood. They hide there in the grasses, shaking along to the wind. Like the reaper, I collect the seeds row by row. The mud feels warm underneath my feet. I jump into the grasses and they scatter. Whine, screech like terrified mice.

There is a disk of fire crashing into the distant field, far across the acres of rye. I see everything before me ablaze in beautiful amber flame. The wind blows and covers me in ash. I feel it burning in my lungs, dry skin crackling and crumbling. And they run into my arms.

Yelena felt a cold chill brush her ears, a terrified shiver dripping down down her spine as the warm ground melted beneath her like microwaved pudding on her lips. It felt like the comfort of childhood beds; it felt like a Sunday morning, a lazy afternoon with warm sunny hearts. In our heart of hearts, the sacred sanctuary, undisturbed by foreign parasites and spoiled, withering spawn that never bloomed. Unplundered, teenage loot sits unmo-
lested 'neath sweet smelling vines. What hand leads them to open as they do? These thoughts are the old skin that dries and falls away. Yelena holds her head in her palms; to feel its weight, to stall its flight and keep it tethered. These thoughts are a scab of dried blood. For the first time in her life, her stomach throbbed with a deep, pained desire to live. Fire shot into her limbs and singed the edges of her nerves as fever-pitched panic overtook her senses. Her legs spun, collapsing in mud, running without direction nor sense as she whined and cried in fear

She ran. From the sky fell pillars of smoke, white like bleached bone. Branches crackled and shattered into a cloud of splinters, charred by flame. Dead leaves dissolved in violent winds rushing past the decaying trees, clinging to Yelena's body like a shroud, remnants of night through the burning clouds she ran to her destination, a haze of white. All rivers run too, and Yelena felt her body grow heavier, dragging behind her ever more corpse-like. In her thoughts painted with visions on milky white, a stray bomb dismembered her, cleaved her in two, decapitated, squashed & pulverized... every step surprised her with its existence, that dogged refusal of her life to cease as the entire world shrank into a single pixel dead-center... captured on grainy phosphor cam, reticle-trained and tango'd. "Shit," she thot to herself. "Shit," she repeats to herself. With her hearing decimated, there is only the sound of water nourishing the aching thump of her heart. She falls through a sheet of leaves and gravel buries her back; an early grave in mud tinged in the warmth of blood

A few flickers returned to her. Through the leaves, she spies light. She breathes in, she breathes in again, savoring the tremble of her lungs. With heat in her face, she rose from the grave like a jilted corpse. Dead is the sound of leaves rustling, and birds chirping, and crickets

& bugs and nasty things fucking on the branches; instead a flowing river of sine, unending. The fire had cleaned her of ghastly human do-up, revealing the machinic core whining hertz punctured only by her distant heartbeat that suggested an older life. She slapped the side of her head, hoping to shake off the noise. The blood oozing from several orifices seemed inappropriate now, she had no use for these illusions. She reached for her phone but found flesh instead. In a frenzy, she dropped to her knees and paddled 'thru the dead, burnt leaves. A couple of writhes, like a fish dancing itself to death... without her phone, her wretched circumstances finally dawned upon her. With the protective tether of great Mother's network severed, she was now alone in the languid dead forest. Wood was peeling off the trees, piercing dead birds with splinters. She was now alone, in this distant land that never seemed so large pinched between her fingers, with only her body. She wept, into her now useless hands. Dead, dead like a battery

Yelena woke up and traveled down the marshes, away from the energy-drink springs and styrofoam bunnies that formed a hallucinatory oasis pouring through her hands. In this desolate forest of dying trees, it scatters to the wind. Her hearing slowly returned, though the hum

would not leave her. It was the network, buzzing & humming thru' neural pathways, speaking in a code she could not understand. The sun had risen higher since she'd last slept, and she'd torn off her Adidas jacket and hung it from her head like a cloak to shield herself. Mud caked unto her skin, giving her a self-impression of a misshapen creature fashioned out of clay. She hummed a song, 'tho she could only remember a hook, repeating, twisting upon itself: "and I know when that hotline bling..." a mantra that rescued her Ego, sent it home aboard a B-52. "That could only mean one thing;" the hot mud clinging to her skin as the night choked the day. Lost then as she was now, though she was sure there would be no rescue. She tried reaching for an optimistic thought but they all buzzed with fear, anxious that they might slip out of their borders and seep into impossibly steep cracks. She saw the shapes of Christine's reply, the little box of her message alive with tense animation and something like words: "I'm right here, bitch." A smiling face. A dagger. It felt like the opposite of loneliness somehow. It's a faint headache now

Further down, 'tween branches caught on jagged rocks, bones baking in the sun, crunchy grass trampled by foot-- Yelena saw tracks running down through the dirt,

past foggy plastics & cigarettes. She peaked over leaves, scanning the horizon; all noisy, squirming green. She felt like a hunted creature, a hare hopping thru' the farm, the sun a massive eye peek-aboo-ing through the glass and hot with pity as it gently robs her of daylight. She ran over the shanty road, passing through the shrouds of overgrown grass to hide herself. Beside her, underneath the canopy, she saw white tarps burdened with human shapes. The air smelled putrid, stench condensing onto her face, robbing her of any rights to be human. She felt beastly; a creature stalking amongst the dead. Would a car ride along and explode her head all over the moss & berries? She imagined herself becoming a mythical undead symbol, scared children running to their parents' bed to complain about her matted hair and cracked skin. She imagined them rising from the white tarps, teeth yellow in a smile

Further down the road, Yelena sees the bruised wood of village life. Broken windows swung, letting whistling dust pour out from the empty homes. Open suitcases, strewn about with spilled shirts and open dresses onto crumbling streets, some folded into clumps and others flat and limp. A lone fox drank at a puddle gathering beside a run-down little shop. A decaying piece of cardboard; a plastic face made pale by sunlight that eats at its edges.

A few beer bottles rolled down the street. Yelena threw a bottle at the fox, who ran off to hide under a beat-up little square car to watch it roll down into a drain. A power-line twitched nervously above her. She had yet to rejoin the land of the living. Her shoes squished beneath her, heavy and laden with drying mud. Bricks spun 'round her head; every minute, the wood and stone seemed to recombine into new houses. She saw herself in shiny, broken glass: disjointed, the smooth corners of her wholeness were now split into discrete parts that met nowhere. The name Yelena seemed to her now an appendix swollen with disease; cut it out, quick, undo yourself of this terrible burden the past forces upon you. She wiped away the warm mud from under her eyes. The sun sits on her skin, its warmth oozing into the disparate parts to make broken fragments whole

She tumbled from one sunken house to the next, trying to force herself through the front door. She could hear crickets, soaked wood crackling under her feet-- the town was devoid of anything, even the stubbornness of primitive living, as dead birds and rats swam in the pools of watery mud. Her stomach rumbled, the rumble traveled downward, pain radiating into her hips... a deep, pained desire to life. She saw a hatchet lying besides wood, still dry, freshly chopped. It sat before an old decrepit build-

ing, a hole blown into its black innards, with nothing left to burn. She approached the hatchet and took it into her hand, and the thought of dismembering herself, of reducing herself down to the constituent parts throbbled into her mind. She pulled up her t-shirt and set the edge of the hatchet to her stomach. What would she name herself, this product of hers? Besides a few tools, a puppet dressed in a red headscarf and white cloth watched with black eyes. Her first subscriber. She faced the puppet and smiled, then made the smallest of cuts into her belly, just enough to draw a bit of blood. Yelena is now merely pieces, scattered like splinters and ash; feeling unburdened, she leaves the hatchet behind her

Past the blackened wooden fence, a house sat so inviting with its devastated windows & open doors. Mud had splattered onto the walls, seeming like earthly blood. The smell of turpentine loomed in the air. The floor was covered in trampled clothing, broken glass, beer dripping down from the ceiling. Squirring insects crowded in the kitchen, familial nests in the stillborn soups & crusty breads. Her stomach grumbled. She opened the drawers, the cabinets, scattering the sugar and salt and cutlery onto the ground. Cans of strange fish and depressed confectionery looked even stranger beside the bright colors of

sprightly potato chips, space-age aluminum protecting their undead supremacy. American foodstuffs, bestowed unto us by Nay-toe, could outlive any civilization made of fragile bone & wood. She finds a few cigarettes, stowed behind damp sugar cubes, and lights them on the stove. The packaging showed a cowboy, in mid toke, blowing smoke into the eyes of the entire world. Blessed Nay-toe; she takes, she gives. The burning is a raw display of force, a symbol of what must be done with the past. You can halt it no more than you can halt the smoke that enters the willing lungs of others, and hers too. It's the return of the past, asking to be repaid its debt. She coughs, hacks, throws up a little bit into the sink; a purge of some kind. She drops the cigarette onto the floor and reaches for the packaged plasticine foods: delirious twink-y chocolate-coated pastries, oozing white velvet that melts like cream, fluffy globules of airy sugar. She squeezes the tender spongy cake together with the chocolate, forming a congealed ball of syrup-shortening, and takes furious bites, one after another, gobbling up a thousand industrial-strength calories. Her stomach cried in agony; would her organism meld with the edible plastic, her person itself becoming imperishable goods? She left a trail of crumbs behind her as she stumbled to the fridge, in which everything was black with decay except for a colorful orange bottle of soda. She

glugged & chugged the soda, feeling the gas well up in her throat, leaving her feeling heavy like an ancient tree. It satisfied the hunger, but not the lack. The homogeneous orange liquid spilling from her lips civilized her, a shield against the dead earth. She heaved herself from one room to the next; the dull white lace, the red checkerboard patterns, the stained wood. Beside the black metal stove, a few wrinkled pictures hung from the wall. There were children with teeth missing, an old woman disappearing in the background who smiles to the camera, an old passport photo with a middle-aged woman whose dirty blonde locks fell across her forehead. She looked frightened, as if it had been taken in service of some unknown purpose. She sees her own reflection take her place; wrinkles of skin and scars, etched into stone. She packed what was left of the shiny, sticky cakes into her pockets. She takes the pictures too; the paper feels comforting under her fingertips. She fantasizes about the middle-aged woman's escape, the children strapped onto the axle. She sees them running for the border, fire nipping at their feet, sailing down a river of blood and bleached bone.

“Tochna, khochesh eta dyelat?” he asked as he covered Yelena with the blanket and buried her under wooden crates. She wondered how many he'd smuggled

in & out, his wallet a little less fat every time he passed a military checkpoint. Nay-toe troops mostly turned a blind eye to the guns & ammo, chicks, and drugs back-forth from the Zone, as long as they'd get first dibs anyway. She learned about this one from a haul vlog, showing off the spoils of a raid on a pharmaceutical factory. Coyote got to eat a little too. She hid in the gaps of a large cargo bed, carved enough just to hide a few people. “Da,” she said. You've done it so many times before, what's so different now? She'd never thought that coyotes would have feelings of their own, their own boundaries and lines, no matter how arbitrary they'd seem. She'd hoped the dollars would override his guilt, his common sense. Every man has his price, and every woman too. She felt him open the door of the truck, his weight pulling her down with him. Had she gone too far? Every time her anxieties threatened to overwhelm her, she'd bite her finger 'till blood was drawn. At the airport, lying about her purpose to the border agent. Paying off the taxi driver. The mysterious Telegrams,Whatsapps... a trail of blood sometimes followed, draining her of that particular humour. The truck shook beneath her, and she pressed her arms up against the wood for some resemblance of stability. She thought of her mother, praying every minute to prolong the lie. She'd called before entering the Zone, using a phone-

card to mask her location, making sure it was right before her mother would come home from work. “I’m having so much fun here,” biting her finger between every sentence. “Sometimes I get lonely, but I’m meeting lots of people.” The truck stopped and she heard a guard ask why he was returning to the Zone. “Miss you. Miss you so much. Love you mom. Davai. Paka paka.”

She watched as the sun rose up from the landscape, filling the plane’s cabin with hot white heat. The pilot spoke in Russian, announcing that for security reasons they’d be interviewing people at the airport. She felt sleep creep up on her senses, but she never could sleep upright. On her phone, an old video of Christine... she was playing the violin, reliving through old lessons punctuated by embarrassed laughs. “I just can’t,” she said between giggles, before continuing onto the next bar of Sibelius. Yelena admired her most in these short, tender moments of ambition tempered by levity. She tried to swallow down some of her tears, but she felt them pour onto her hands. So exceedingly rare are these little instances of utopia, even though they’re all that make living worthwhile. Yelena locked the phone and set away, trying to recover the memory of levity as the weight of her actions had set in. In pursuit of Christine, she paid the price of admission to the

Zone; she is forever changed, never to close her eyes again to the barbarity of man and the finality of a single artillery that exudes death in all its radius. From this moment on, anything not blood and harsh metal is merely temporary reprieve-- earned but never expected. By crossing into the perimeters of the Zone, she becomes a mutant, a sponge that sucks up the muck of its environment. Only now does she realize that even if Christine is alive, a part of Yelena dies here

I write this to you because I don’t know who else to write it to. I don’t really have friends. I don’t even know if you’re still there

Elon Rao. Last seen: 403d

My friend got into some trouble, I think. Chasing it, you know. Tired of typical ‘yt’ society. Tired of people pretending everything was OK. Everyone does it nowadays I guess. Maybe you’ve seen them talk about the good life out there. Maybe you seen them take selfies next to rotting corpses and burning cars. You know, they’re calling them “war influencers” and shit like that. All that fake shit. Or maybe it’s all real, I’m not sure. But Christine went too, and her thousands of followers came along. She’s somewhere there in the Zone, not answering her DMs, not mak-

ing any new content. I'm worried. Worried sick. I feel like she's my responsibility. I dunno, I guess I always wished I had a sister. Or maybe it's something else.

I told my mother I'm going to the summer camp I always go to, this time as a volunteer. But actually, I took a plane to one of the countries next to the Zone. It doesn't matter where. Someone's reading this anyway. Following me around. I took a plane, then I'll take a bus, then someone will smuggle me back into the Zone. I speak the language, or at least the language it used to be. I'm gonna tell them I have family to visit, to look after, in one of the communities close to the border of the Zone. Shocking how easy it is, to find this when you want to. To walk into a war zone like this. A lot of kids do it this way. It's the only business for the locals who lost everything in the decades-long civil wars. These guys, in turbans or whatever, taking money from rich, spoiled brats with gold-plated guns that they recognized from Soldier's Creed, screaming clan tags as if invoking the power of some malevolent deity. Shit. Maybe that's where you are too. I've read about you in Telegram groups. I don't know what they see, what they think about you

What did I see? You were a normal kid. You had glasses, square shitty ones. Stubbles. Nothing to say, or do. You had the same thoughts as anyone else. You went to the same events, talked about the same topics. You made the same statements, you clapped along. But inside of you, something started rotting away. Everything around you makes you feel isolated and alone. It starts small. Something bothers you, and you don't understand why. It's wrong, and everyone knows it's wrong but no-one cares. You don't understand why people are so careless, so heartless. You start to hate other people, for their hypocrisy, for their casual cruelty. You start to feel that the world is getting worse, even though you feel nothing for the past because it never existed for you anyway. It doesn't make sense, and it never starts to. You start to get tired, it wears you out. Before you even realize how hard you've fallen, you become an alien to everyone else. Somehow, it seems all so hard to put into words that don't make you want to kill yourself out of embarrassment.

I don't know if I'll make it out alive. To read your responses I mean. Maybe I'll end up like Christine. Or maybe I'll run out of money. Anyway, 'till next time

the wind takes them. She stops the truck; the vomit flowing from her mouth was the only bright, living thing in the empty wasteland around her. They had been torched, transformed into human-shaped charcoal briquette. In the cover of the fog of war, Nay-toe erases its mistakes. Their skin made anonymous, jagged and silvery; they were no longer individuals but a mass of atrocity. Each of them once had names, wives and children, and the smallest, most trivial desires set off 'till tomorrow. Or the next day. The day after that. The promise of tomorrow drips through the cracks of the window, a water-drop on the tip of the everyman's tongue who doggedly chase next evening's sundown for today's sunrise. And they'd find nothing. No, forget it; shut the blinds and doors. Don't let tomorrow in-- that mooch, liar, cheat. She feels neither pity, nor sorrow for tomorrows. She wipes away the vomit from her mouth and returns to the truck, humming a tune to mask the sound of crushing bone

Down beyond the valley, she spots a body of water. Her truck rams into a few trees, softly bringing her to a stop. Something like joy begins to irritate her senses. Down from the chalk-caked concrete, water rushes down the hill and splatters onto broken remnants of a bunker. Marshes hung 'neath splattered graffiti, punctuated by

shell impacts. Tomorrow is already here, growing in the placid puddles. Yelena spills out of the truck, leaving behind a trail of gravel. A bee drank from a flower stuck underneath the wheel. Like a bruised animal, she hobbled over to the edge of the water and stuck her fingers into the angry torrent. Cool, crisp to the touch; she cupped some of it and wiped her face. The murky water ran down her neck, bringing back to life the dry, encrusted stone her clothes had become. She shivered; she thought of ablution rituals, a surrender to the new by shedding the dried chaff of yesterdays. This is happening-- she presses her foot into a little worm, it twitches then contracts into a fleshy spiral. A little pollution is no terrible thing. She falls to her knees and plunges her face... the world for an instant becomes a dull roar, a solitary hue.

She pulled out her face. She looked down. Her shoes had become something between sponge and pudding, oozing from their orifices. She placed them into the water, feeling relief as the current dragged away the mud and clay. She pulled them off, pulled off the rotting socks... her bare feet were pale, completely robbed of blood. She stepped back into the water, shivering as the chill spread up her body. She first peels away her pants, made rigid yet brittle by the mud. Her few belongings: packages of

cakes, a few family pictures. The dense trackpants melt in the water, unearthing the marks of civilization etched into the fabric. She pulled off her jacket, then the t-shirt underneath it, letting them fall into the water, letting them get caught on a branch. A splash spilled water onto her skin, prompting her to jump and grind her teeth. A strange cowardice gripped her... even with dirt caked onto her body, she shivered in fear of chilled, hostile water. She peeled away the bra, the underwear stained with blood... she counts, adin, dva, dri; she shouts and plunges herself into the river.

She studied herself in the mirror of the truck, squeezing her hair, clearing it of splinters and stones. Yelena... Yelena... it gave her a foul aftertaste in her mouth. Could these bones, this flabby flesh pale and polished, stained with freckles and scars, really be the extent of everything that name meant? She pulled her wet clothes from the river and laid them out on the roof of the truck, which was now burning hot from the rising sun. She felt bare, but somehow not altogether nude... she imagined herself as a naked corpse: river chill running through her mouth, underneath her arms, her hairs standing at attention, a numbness in her sex. Dull light roved over little buds, growing sharp and dense on polished glass. A rash oozed

'neath a thigh, with dense archipelagos of rough flesh in a salty sea. A flake of dried skin laid on the surface, delicate like paper. Yelena... Yelena; just saying it grants license to the warm-blooded, puts off the writhing darkness, a ward against unremarkable bones. In her head, she'd rehearsed her death over & over again-- but every death felt special, genuine contours in each staging, sapping trauma of mundane certainty. Doesn't the body come together as easily as it comes apart? A dull ache presses in her belly. She felt a hunger she could not satiate, her soul a rumbling belly. She opens the truck. There in the darkness of its cabin, behind the chairs, she sees the brilliant sparkle of an eye. She jumps... a spasm of fear and she hides behind the open door, covering herself, shielding herself: "who are you?" There's no answer. "Who are you?" The sparkle disappears, and a small figure claws at the steering wheel to reveal itself from the shade. She saw the face of a young girl, flaxen skin, an eye and a cheek molten as if made of wax and put under a heat lamp. "Who are you?" She said again, less tensely with the grip of her hand loosening. The face stared, nothing in its dark eye. A single mole sat underneath her flat nose. "Kak tebya zavut?" The young girl shook her head, her gaze low and subdued. "Ne znayesh?" The young girl scratched her face, and then pointed at her