

**pages 7-9**

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There's always a sense of devastation in morning.

When the sun can't be seen  
rising in the east or setting in the west,  
when rain beads on the balcony railing,  
melts the decking,  
soaks into the wooden chair  
and gives it a pre-patinated finish,  
empties the clotheslines,  
leaves the streets a little more deserted,  
draws hopelessness  
out from under the eaves.

I hear the tanker truck lumbering uphill  
where newborn squalling  
spreads its wings out through the half-open window  
of the white house.

A gull loses a bread crust  
from its beak.  
The cat pounces on it  
before the gull ever has a chance to dive.

How many days have I lived  
in this place?  
Attempting to keep track of the days and reason,  
a sense of time and a sense of life—  
it seems that even the faint vestiges of peace and quiet  
tend to disappear here.  
Here in Sundayland.

I see the houses huddle  
against the ill-tempered climate,  
the lack of agency, imagination,  
money, enthusiasm.  
The roofs rust.  
The gutters leak.  
Stores go out of business.  
Others open.  
Paint flakes off the windowsills and siding.  
The steps leading to the exit doors are torn.

They say that the cement they made in the old days  
was no good.  
They say that the summers were hotter  
back then.  
Drier.

There are trees and bushes outside.  
Greenish-brown.  
Saturated with water.

When the sun shines,  
they are luminous.  
I never manage to capture this vision.  
Maybe I don't dare  
because I know  
I won't be able to feel it  
burn, shine, warm  
before it vanishes again.

A heavy, submarine-grey cloud hovers  
over the island of Vágur.  
God only knows if the airplane will be able to land today.

### **pages 11-13**

But I can always put the kettle on to boil.  
Make a cup of coffee that's mostly creamer.  
Try to guess which country song is playing  
on the little radio in my neighbor's garage.  
I can call someone,  
leaf through the newspaper insert ads.  
Read an article on the internet  
about modern relationships  
while you sleep all day long  
because nighttime is your breathing room.  
I can visit the neighbor I saw walking around  
aimlessly a couple of days ago  
or sit down and do my work on a computer

that needs its memory  
and screen wiped clean.

“Smart people never get bored,”  
mom always used to say to me.  
I hardly ever got bored as a child,  
but the older I get  
the more boredom tends to creep up on me  
and into my days.

Mussels, seaweed, and queen scallops  
live along the foreshore.  
I really like poems about limpets and marine animals.  
Spineless animals and spineless people.  
When sitting next to the radiator

eating almonds,  
it's interesting to think about  
cellar dwellers and hunchbacked creatures  
on the other side of thick walls in damp,  
dark rooms underground  
as the uncalcified kettle comes to a boil.  
Breath and the will to live  
slowly disperse with the steam  
rolling toward the ceiling.

The door just flew open.  
No one knocks around here.  
Something's tossed onto the foyer floor.  
The racing pulse and dread that someone's come to visit  
quickly disappears  
with the soft sound of the door closing.  
There must be weather stripping on the frame muffling the sound.  
Probably the postman making his rounds, yes.

It's stopped raining,  
the sun breaks through a tiny rift in the clouds.  
It's so cold and raw  
it could just as well be  
the beginning  
of November  
or Eastertime.

One side of the village  
is bathed in sunlight now,  
and I know you can imagine  
how it looks.

The sun slips back behind the clouds,

and this weather report  
has come to an end.

**pages 27-28**

In this reality, I fry the hearts of lambs.  
Here in my new home,  
in my new skin,  
I slice them into small pieces.  
I remove the sinews and clotted blood.  
I leave the fat intact  
and watch them curl up  
in the sizzling oil.  
I see their final throes,  
as life ebbs out of them,  
blend with onion, salt, pepper  
and a faint ray  
of sunlight  
nearly obscured by a cloud  
over the dam.

The cat eats from her bowl.  
Noisily.  
She has blue eyes.  
The man lies napping.  
Quietly.  
He has blue eyes.

The mountains are peeking into the kitchen.

I keep stirring  
but turn down the heat.  
No one likes scorched hearts.

## **Pages 37-38**

We're eating imported potatoes this winter.

Blight ate its way through the garden all summer  
and seems to have eaten its way  
further and further  
into our home  
as autumn's worn on.

The brown slugs are hibernating.  
Slumbering while the sun visits warmer lands.  
I remember the white fence  
covered with black  
patterns,  
the narrow alleys between houses  
plastered with  
a yellowish, thick mucous,  
the buckets of poison,  
leaves nibbled full of holes,  
hollowed potatoes,  
dead flowers,  
and the rhubarb.

The path from light to darkness  
is slippery and clammy.

With each step, the sound  
of the tiny, creeping,  
sticky bodies  
smooshing out from under your shoes  
as you tramped back and forth  
from place to place,  
house to house.  
Strangely enough,  
images of southerly vineyards  
bathed in a golden dusting of sunlight,  
where laughing,  
barefoot, bronzed women dressed in white  
stomp on sweet grapes,  
linger at the threshold  
of my retina  
like an uncracked  
mirror.

### **Pages 48-51**

It's possible  
that it's necessary  
to sail,  
not live,  
I think  
as I stare out  
at the shipless bay.

But without a compass,  
I'm nothing.

Without it,  
I can't  
reel up the hawsers,  
put out to sea,  
and set course  
into a new world.  
Without knowing  
which direction the needle's pointing,  
I drift helplessly  
in vast, unfamiliar expanses  
where the blurred horizon  
bobs up and down indeterminately,  
pulsates, morphs  
with the blue ocean's salt currents  
and scatters in sharp rays of light  
that overlay my vision  
so that I lose all sense of direction  
as the pungent smell of vinegar  
stings in my nostrils,  
creeps up into my sinuses,  
and settles on my tongue.

In the instant  
you look up from the blue light  
I see the lie, for a split second,  
carved out clear as day.

When you offer me the cup,  
I hope  
for one hopeless moment  
that redemption lies  
in the quenching of thirst.

In the instant  
I take a sip,

I feel my wings collapse  
like the pages of a boring book  
you've shut so violently  
that all the letters scatter  
and the story is rewritten  
and the dust from old narratives  
flutters down to the floor  
in the ray of sunlight  
that's slicing you in two.  
Cracks in the mirror,  
maybe even in hope,  
love,  
and faith—  
cracks in everything  
that once held meaning.

But it makes no difference.

Everything that was,  
everything that is,  
and  
everything to come.

The lie is still a lie.  
Even the one  
told on a compassless,  
uncharted, perilous sea  
where the only possibility  
you had to make it back to shore  
was taken from you  
when you least expected it.

I'm not the only one  
who's afraid  
of being lost at sea.

