

A Fire Within

A Quiet Departure to the North



Introduction

Something begins in silence.
Soft. Unremarkable.
And yet present – if you listen.

This text opens a space.
It speaks of Sina.
Of a departure.
Of a movement that grows.
Like mist lifting.
Like skin remembering.
Like earth beneath bare feet.

No concept speaks here.
Only breath flows.
A path unfolds by walking.

Sina appears.
From images. From depth.
From what was – and still wants to become.

She stays in motion.
She follows the call.
She walks.

– Dirk

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City Beginnings

In the morning, when the city awakens beneath her, the light ripples across the windowsill and makes the dust dance in the air.

Sina sits barefoot on the floor, legs drawn up, next to the old bookshelf she built from wine crates. Beside her lies Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund*. A linen bookmark marks the page that stirred something in her, with a few scribbled thoughts in the margin.

The smell of coffee rises from the small espresso maker on the gas stove. Above it: an open shelf with turmeric, cardamom, and red pepper.

The scent is warm and oriental, with a touch of Marrakesh. On the balcony, the olive tree sways gently in the wind.

An old, peeling chair stands there, next to a half-full glass of water and a fern that reaches for the sun like a living thing.

Inside:

A picture on the wall shows a woman with no face — only hands.

Tender, open, as if caught between moments.

Sina leans back and feels the linen against her skin.

A quiet pull in her belly — no pain, more like a whisper, a calling, not yet in words.

She brushes her foot over the wood.

She always feels most honest barefoot.

As if there's ground beneath her — but no more roots.

In the next room: Jona.

His jazz hums softly. He hums along.

He loves these quiet mornings.

Sina's breath feels different today.

Deeper, wider.

As if something is settling into her that hasn't had space in a long time.

Today, something begins to shift.

In Between Cities

On the night before her departure, Sina leaves the window open and lies awake.

The wind carries sounds up from the boulevard — a siren, a burst of laughter, the clinking of glasses.

Next to her lies her backpack, packed with two shirts, a sketchbook, and the book she never finished.

She gets up and steps onto the balcony.

The olive tree barely moves, while the city glows in silence.

There is no plan in her belly, but something pulls at her, something calls.

A taxi takes her to the airport, then a train, a bus

—

and finally, the last stretch on foot.

At the Edge of the Forest

Sina steps off the train.

She carries a small backpack and has no signal

She stops and takes a deep breath. The ground

smells of moss and old rain, and a trace of

woodsmoke lingers in the air. The cold slips into

her jacket and wakes her in a strange, quiet way.

A path leads into the forest — no sign, no name.

Only traces in the grass suggest that others have

been here before. She follows the path slowly,

listening with every step. At the edge of a clearing

stands a crooked wooden cabin, weathered and

still. A small chimney rises from the roof, the

door creaks. Next to it: a pile of firewood, an old

chair, an enamel cup half-filled with

rainwater. Sina places her hand on the rough

wood of the door, as if it held stories.

She enters and finds herself in an empty, silent

room where time seems to hold its breath.

She sits on the floor, drops her backpack, and

takes off her shoes. Then she listens. Outside,

the wind rustles through the birch trees, a bird

calls, then silence returns.

Inside, there is only her breath,
and the quiet crackle of something beginning to
thaw within her.

The Jetty

The wind carries the scent of earth and old wood,
blended with the damp breath of yesterday's rain
and the rising steam of moss.

Sina sits on the rough steps in front of the cabin,
her bare feet resting on the cool wood.

The cup in her hands brings warmth.

She eats slowly, savoring each bite of her
breakfast — muesli, fruit, oat milk.

A moment of quiet, devoted entirely to the act of
eating, without needing to explain, without
glances from anyone else.

Before her lies the lake — still, nearly glass.

Only a few ripples show where a fish surfaced.

In the background, tall pines rise, twisted and
dark, interrupted by the pale shimmer of birch.

The sky is open, though not kind.

It is honest — the kind of sky the North gives.

Inside, the embers still crackle in the stove,

while the smoke rises straight and thin.
Sina breathes deeply
and something within her grows quiet.

Then she sees him standing on the jetty —
barefoot, holding a cup.
He doesn't look like someone waiting.
Just someone who is.
Sina furrows her brow,
then turns her gaze back to the lake.

No words are spoken that morning.

Mirror

There is something about him she cannot quite grasp. A presence both old and wise, heavy and still — yet within it, a flicker, a hint of play, a secret smile hidden in his posture.
As if he's known the world forever and still chooses to greet it anew each day. Sina isn't sure if she will stay. But she knows: this place is no destination. It is a threshold.

And something within her is crossing it.

The day begins with the scent of damp moss and fresh soil. Sina opens the creaking wooden door. A trace of smoke still lingers — the stove was warm through the night. The lake lies smooth as a sheet of glass. No signal. No Wi-Fi. No voices but her own. She feels the wood beneath her skin. Cold pulls at her soles — not pain, but memory. A bird calls. Then silence. Then the soft thud of her heart. Sina sits on the lowest step. In her hand: a cup of dark, earthy coffee, steaming quietly. Her gaze drifts over the water. At the edge of the jetty, she sees him — the same man, the same cup, the same quiet presence. And still, something has shifted. Maybe only within her. He speaks no words. Yet his presence makes words unnecessary. His scent evokes old wood and time already passed. His eyes ask nothing. They remind her of something she has always known: that she would come. She looks away, then back again. There is a crackle in the air — between strangeness and closeness. She will not speak to him today. *But she will stay.*

The Offering

Before sunrise, when the world still drapes itself
in milky grey, the third day begins.

The trees around the lake stand like beings from
another time. Sina opens the cabin door.

The cold floorboards creak beneath her feet.

She sits on the steps, a cup in her hand.

The man stands at the jetty once more.

His breath rises in soft clouds into the cool air.

He seems as though he's never left — as if he
belongs there. Like the wood beneath his feet.

Like the mist above the water.

He does not wait.

He does not search.

He simply is.

Sina looks over and lingers. A moment.

Maybe longer. Then she begins to walk — step
by step, through the damp grass.

“You're here every morning,” she says. He meets
her gaze and nods.

“Mornings,” he replies, “the lake is the clearest mirror.”

After a pause, he offers:

“Would you like to go canoeing?”

His tone carries no grin, no flirt, only a calm steadiness. His gaze holds her — not tightly, but with presence. Without demand. Without design. Sina says nothing. She returns to the cabin.

Later, alone, her hand rests gently on her belly — as if trying to remember something.

That night, she dreams of a woman made of light, with wild hair, hands full of color, and a laugh that flickers like flame.

And when she wakes, she knows:
something within her is stirring again.

Not tomorrow.

Not someday.

Soon.

On the Water

The mist is denser than usual. She hasn't slept well — yet something pulls her outside, early. The air smells of damp earth and moss. Wood creaks beneath her bare feet. A branch swings back — as if she isn't the first to pass this way. He stands at the jetty, as always. But today he holds a second cup. The haze dances around him, as if it belongs to him. He says nothing. He simply offers her the mug. Their fingers touch — just briefly. A moment of stillness and warmth. Sina accepts. Their hands meet again before stepping into the canoe. They glide across the lake, surrounded by the quiet beauty of a morning whose sound hums deep beneath the skin. The man paddles slowly. No direction. No words.

Only the gentle splash of water between them, a circling heron, the soft rhythm of droplets on wood. Something inside Sina begins to shift.

It feels as though the mist has unlatched a door
within her. Laughter rises — for no reason.
An explosion of color: red, orange, sparks in her
belly.

She sees herself: barefoot, wild, paint on her
hands.

The artist.

Another vision: a compass, a path through
tundra, stone, wide open silence. A figure with
a backpack — deliberate, aware.

The seeker.

And later, quietly, a deer in the woods. Shy —
but steady. It stands, watches her, does not
flinch, does not flee.

Sina breathes in. Deeper than usual.
Something inside her longs for space — more
space than she's ever allowed.

At the end of the tour,
he lays the paddle in the boat.
They step out. The mist begins to lift.
A single beam of sunlight touches the dock.

He looks at her — not asking,
not knowing — only present.

“Some things return when we’ve become quiet enough,” he says.

Then he picks up his cup and walks away.

Farewell

In the evening, Sina returns.

Her hair carries the scent of the lake, of pine needles, of fresh air. The cabin stands as it always has — but something has changed.

Not outside. Inside her.

She takes off her shoes and feeds a few logs into the stove. A crackle. Dancing flames. The space warms slowly. She sits on the floor, her back against the wall. Silence. Fire. Breath.

Then she takes a piece of paper — to express something that moves through her.

Farewell Letter

*I don't know if you'll ever read this letter.
Maybe I'm writing it more for myself.
I'm leaving because something has
awakened in me that no longer wants to
make compromises.
I can feel again what carries me,
and hear what calls me.
I sense that my life won't wait
until everything is perfect.
A quiet, yet relentless feeling is rising
within me – and I've ignored it for too
long.
Thank you for what we shared,
for what we couldn't say,
for the fear I felt by your side –
and the safety, too.
But I'm no longer who I was.
I don't want to just function and please.
I want to be alive, confused, real.
I'm setting off with a small backpack,
a heart that feels alive again, and the
courage
to not know where I'm going.*

*I'm letting you go with respect, with
gratitude, with dignity.*

Take care.

*Perhaps we'll meet again –
as two people
who owe each other nothing.*

– Sina

Departure

She folds the letter and places it on the small wooden shelf by the door. Not to send – but to release. Outside, the wind whispers through the trees, and a fox slips between the shadows. Sina steps into the night. The air carries the scent of change.

She lifts her face to the sky,
and the wind moves through her hair
as if something old is letting go
and something new is quietly calling.

She is no longer the same.

And tomorrow, she will begin to truly depart.

Thank you for reading.

This story is a beginning –
for me, too.

If you feel like it,
I'd love to hear what it moved in you.

You can find more at
www.amfeuerderwandlung.com

Or write to me:
dirk@amfeuerderwandlung.com