

Skagerrak

I sit, still.

Water flows.

The stone I am sitting on shifts with it, and I can hear it creak and groan as it moves.

I kick away from it and wander, wander across the water. School of fish are scared by the violence of my movements.

It's this city.

So many memories, too many, like being drunk on something that went bad too long ago, like -I imagine- a bad trip with bad people around you, where one can almost taste the mediocre rancor in the air, like the aftertaste of suckling on a dirty, greasy teat. Like being in a small room filled with smoke.

Water flows.

But that's the issue, isn't it? It flows and it flows.

I keep swimming, taking as few breaks for air as I can, spending so much time underwater that my lungs ache and my head hurts and I feel dizzy, but I stay underwater, I stay in this stage, in my stage, rather than walk on the stone of Landly that is so hard and old and meaningless.

But time passes, and I am equine, and as much as I want to lose myself in the hunt, I am starting to feel weak and have taken too much from the waters lately.

So I swim up and walk on the downside of the stone until I reach the edge, where I can climb to hear whispers, light flooding into my eyes and distracting me with the confusing blur of pale colors that ponies are. Kids whisper loudly, wondering, am I one of the mysterious newcomers? Will I be mad if they ask about my eyes? Adults chide them, and someone walks lightly my way.

I turn away from them and wander aimlessly; if the stone of Landly is bad, the people is even worse. I wander, and up here, nothing flows. Nothing at all.

Nothing flows.

I feel more than I see the night fall. At first it's like I am walking in the

shadow of something, but then the cold descends on my wet fur, a familiar and soothing cold that reminds me of...

Of hunting.

Of being mindless because I wanted to be.

Of deciding what mattered and what didn't.

(Yet I never asked the dragon's name.

Yet it was me who defended myself from anyone who attacked me.

Yet he helped me. Sometimes. Only when I truly couldn't help myself whether I asked or not, and on time, I understood that was a form of respect, and maybe even trust.)

Reminds me of the first late night I spent drunk, floating, maybe horny, with my belly up wondering if the starry sky was as pretty as everyone said and what would I do if I floated too far from the cabin and the dragon didn't notice. Reminds me of how frustrated I was when I realized what had floated away was my booze, and that was the only time in years anger made me yell. And when I calmed down, still drunk, I wondered what would I play if I ever stepped on a stage again.

And to think in the end the bird convinced me to play something so silly...

But Far away likes that play. It probably reminds him of home, or something corny like that.

Nothing flows.

These are memories I hold on to. I hold on to them, remember all the things they taught me, because the alternative is thinking about Landly.

I hear a familiar creak of wood, and follow my ears, trembling, until I walk on the familiar walkway that surrounds my home.

Nothing—

Water flows .

But that is the issue, isn't it.

It's not that water flows or stone doesn't. It's that I don't. It's that city that makes me sick, this city where I don't flow. This city where I am stuck, in useless remembrance of so many irrelevant things, in rancid pseudo melancholy. In this city where I am afraid of acting, where I have to grab onto this character -my own character, the skin of my choosing- so hard I

stop flowing, lest I slip back.

Back to *her*.

Back to an useless girl who thought neediness was love and dependence was trust... to a bad character.

So I grab, I grab so hard, because old habits last long and part of you wants to slip back into their comfort forever, no matter what, and you have to hold on to what's yours in the hope that they go away some day, lying to yourself as much as it takes. Because that is what sickens me, that this city makes it a bit of a lie or at least seem like one.

Water flows.

But I don't. And in ways I don't know how to tell, it hurts.

After a while, I curl down on the center of the cabin, and sleep just like that night when my booze floated away and I was horny.