

Blackened stones. A man with a plastic bag sits next to you on the bus. Large wheels heave over the tarmac, it is hot outside. You stare out the window as the bus passes by grassland; a farmhouse, two brown horses. The sun is up high in the sky. A woman gets into her car and drives off, you watch another roll a cigarette while standing on a porch; she lights it. The man sitting in the seat next to you hums softly to himself. Every so often he sighs, then remains quiet for a while until, after a few minutes, he starts humming the same melody over again. His voice is low. Outside: a lake fallen dry. The man wears green – a green shirt dark green pants – and holds the plastic bag with both hands. Outside: the remnants of a wall.

At times your neighbour shifts his body. He leans forward, searches for something in his pockets; takes out his phone, puts it back, takes out his phone again; he finds his keys, fiddles with them; holds up a little note, it is crumpled; and then he puts everything back in the dark green pockets – all the while the plastic bag remains closed on his lap. Outside there is more grass. The man gets up and places the plastic bag above both of your heads and then he sits down again. You press your face to the glass window and watch the farmland pass by: two men are lifting up a dead cow from the ground, each of them holds one of its horns. The sun looks hot above the large, dead body. The animal is heavy, they drag the cow over the floor and its blood leaks into the earth. After spending the past two, three hours next to one another, you can smell the man's body and it is distracting you from the cow. Annoying. In the very moment you want to pass over him and search for another seat, so that you can return to your stare, his face tightens: "What mist smells like smoke?" He asks. The bus slows down and takes the right lane and you sit there looking at the man's face, unsure how to respond. Pulling over at the gas station, the bus driver asks all of you to leave the bus and to return after the lunch break, thirty minutes from now, please make sure to be on time, he stresses, you have only thirty minutes, and your neighbour still sits right next to you, unmoving, as he repeats his question: "What mist smells like smoke?" Outside the grass is not green. The sky is not blue.

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