

Lost in Suomi

by Linda Simoni-Wastila

The map rested in my lap, a useless blur of 'k's and 'l's and 'i's. The GPS bleated unintelligible directives. I'd wanted to take the train, then the bus, to the cabin perched on the brim of the Arctic Circle, but Chris insisted on driving.

"Better to see the land of your ancestors," he said. "Besides, we're in no hurry."

But I was in a hurry.

"See? North." He pointed to the compass, smiling. "So rest. And trust me to get us to our destination."

I closed my eyes. He was right, trust and rest; the chemo had robbed me of all my energy. The sun strobed through the birch forest, flinging dappled warmth on my cheeks. The crumpled map slid to the floor.

When I woke, the clock said eight at night but the sky looked like mid-afternoon. Chris rolled down the windows. Wind pummeled me awake, smelling of pine and some quality of freshness, of newness, I could not identify. He hummed softly and kept patting my knee.

"Almost there," he said.

The trees thinned. I wanted to sleep more, but Chris cut the engine.

"Where are we?"

He helped me from the car. My hips ached. I leaned against him. Pine needles blanketed the ground. Then, the woods ended and sky spread before us, a never-ending canvas of liquid silver that melted into water, blue as his eyes, as blue as our daughter's, now grown.

He squeezed my hand. "We are exactly where we need to be."

