

Macarena Lithuania

by Maggie Sokolik

At dinner in Marrakech, Namid danced on the table, waving a white napkin, propelled by jetlag and poor judgment. She had danced in Viennese palaces, tangoed in Tashkent, and swayed to the music of Georgie Fame in Dublin.

Gypsy blood, her grandfather called it, an easy metaphor for the desire to wander. He was military careerman.

On his rare visits home, he bore tales of eating goat's eyes with Haile Selassie and riding the last chopper out of Saigon.

Gypsy blood. Namid wanted it.

Vilnius wasn't as advertised—no meat shortages, no bread lines, no Soviet-era grimness. Her hotel was owned by basketball star Marčiulionis. She ate sushi next to Michael Jordan's oversized sneakers in the memorabilia-filled bar.

Saturday night she found a traveling disco in an old monastery—the cover charge included champagne and caviar. The Macarena played, and everyone jumped and shimmied. They did not do the Macarena.

Namid asked the guy next to her, “Don't you know this dance?”

He was a Marine Guard. On Sunday, they drove to the Polish border in a Mercedes with diplomatic plates. He translated the Russian monument where Hitler's trains stopped in the leafy green forest.

Her grandfather had been a Marine Guard at the Nuremberg trials. Or, so the story went. Namid doubted the truth of these stories, just as she began to doubt the truth of her own.

Gypsy blood. She wondered if they knew the Cupid Shuffle in Johannesburg.

