

The wetsuit is still a little damp from the previous day - or perhaps not damp, but simply holding the cold. She drags the thick rubber up her thighs, slightly squeaking, and wrestles her shoulders into the body of it. The suit at her skin chills before it warms, before the blood in her body can generate its own heat. It is still two hours til sunrise, not even yet twilight, so dark Liisi must wear a torch over her thermal hat, because she needs both her hands for her morning's task.

She stuffs her feet into her partner's boots and takes her blanket and her flask of coffee from the floor. It is only a short walk down the hill but she finds herself jogging, as if she must outrun the break of dawn. But she is ahead - she is always ahead - and when she steps onto the beach she can still only see the rows of frozen pebbles by her own light. She does not go into the water; she never goes into the water, for it is dangerous to swim in the darkness, and especially when you are alone. Yet even when the sun rises the sea holds no pull for her. All the water she needs is right here on the shore.

She sips coffee til dawn, listening to the sweet lap of the tide, and finally the twilight shows the beach for what it is; not pebbles, in fact, but thousands of glistening, frozen eggs.

*

The land on which Liisi awakes rises higher every day. It is marginal, the sort of thing you could never feel, let alone see; a process that began twenty thousand years ago when the sheer weight of ice depressed the Earth's crust, when the mantle shifted and the shape of the land changed to show it. A terraforming, but not by human hands; a change to suit a loss, to show where something had once been.

*

The eggs arrived a week ago. A neighbour yelled over her fence - go see, go see. A small crowd where the sand meets the trees, and before them, thousands and thousands of ovoids, from toes to sea. They were perfect, and glassy; opaque in blushes of blues and mauve. *A rare meteorological phenomenon*, read someone Googling, *from water that's cold, and calm, with a beach that's slightly sloping.*

The newsmen came, and photographers, and, strangely, police. But no one touched the eggs, nor spoke of removing them, and by dusk, it was just Liisi and the thickening night. She waited for an hour after everyone had gone. She was freezing and hungry, and greatly unsettled - it was the longest she'd been out in months - but she knew she couldn't leave til she had seen for herself. By the light of her phone she picked a pink-marbled egg. She held it near her face, her breath and hands both warming the ice, and watched it til her fingers were blue, her forearms aching, her body trembling. She held it until it had melted away.

*

The land on which Liisi awakes is rising; gently higher, day by day. It is the result of the planet undoing its damage; the weight upon it has melted, and shifted, and slowly the crust is recovering its strength. And with recovery, creation occurs. The island beneath Liisi's feet did not exist, once; there were a dozen tiny islands, each isolated from the other. But twelve thousand years ago the land began to rise, and above the sea level these islands met, and now there is a whole where before there were fragments. This is happening at a speed imperceptible to you or me. And yet Liisi likes to stand with her eyes closed - at the end of her garden, in the afternoons, when everything is quiet save for the birds - and wait for the sensation of lifting, of being lifted.

*

The air bites tonight, for it is still the night - still seven hours before twilight arrives. It has been a week, and there are still so many. But there is no way of knowing how long they will stay; winter sun is low and fierce, and Liisi can see them shrinking, melting. So she pulls the stiff rubber over her skin, and it is clammy and cold, but it will keep her warm as she kneels amongst the ice.

She stuffs her feet into her husband's boots - still warm, she thinks, but it cannot be so - and takes her blanket and coffee flask as she goes. She has slept all day, and will work until morning, but as the sun comes up she will retreat to her bed. It is something she cannot stand for the others to see.

By her own light, she sees them. Waiting, pristine. As she works, you will not see the change; it is too slow for anyone to perceive. But it is happening; Liisi knows it is happening. She will take them in her hands, in her warm, human hands, and watch the ice melt over her white knuckles, until her palms are empty and she cannot feel them at all. The ice melting can change the Earth; can change the very shape of everything she will ever know. She will hold each one, every single one, just to check that there is nothing inside.