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**IMAGE OF LATVIA IN INARA VERZEMNIEKS’  
MEMOIR  
“AMONG THE LIVING AND THE DEAD”**

**LATVIJAS TĒLS INĀRAS VĒRZEMNIECES MEMUĀRĀ  
“STARP DZĪVAJIEM UN MIRUŠAJIEM”**

BACHELOR THESIS

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## Anotācija

Emigrācija liek cilvēkiem veidot valsts tēlu, balstoties atmiņās, un daudz pētnieku ir pētījuši valstu tēlus, kas izpausti literatūrā. Darba mērķis ir noteikt semantiskās makrostrukturās, kas veido Latvijas tēlu I. Vērzemnieces memuārā, un noskaidrot, kā noteiktās makrostrukturās veicina dzimtenes tēla veidošanos, kas iedibināta žanrā. Darba pētnieciskā daļa tika veikta, pielietojot semantisko makroanalīzi un atslēgvārdu analīzi. Abas pētījuma metodes sniedza līdzīgus rezultātus un ļāva secināt, ka sintezētais Latvijas tēls balstās uz izturīgiem un apņēmīgiem cilvēkiem, kas pārvarējuši neticamas grūtības, paļaujoties uz sevi un dabu, gūstot spēku no savām kultūras vērtībām, kas sevī iekļauj dziļu cieņu pret mirušajiem. Pētījuma rezultāti norāda uz Otrā pasaules kara nepārtraukto klātbūtni – Latvijas tēls galvenokārt ir veidots, pamatojoties uz šiem notikumiem.

**Atslēgvārdi:** memuārs, valsts tēls, makrostrukturās, atslēgvārdu analīze, Otrais pasaules karš, Latvija

## **Abstract**

Emigration compels people to develop country images from memory and many researchers have studied country images expressed in literature. The present study aimed at identifying semantic macrostructures that construct the image of Latvia in I. Verzemnieks' memoir and determining how the identified macrostructures contribute to the image of homeland established in the genre. Research was conducted employing macroanalysis and keyword analysis. Both methods yielded similar results and the synthesized image of Latvia is that of resilient and determined people who have overcome incredible hardships by relying on themselves and nature, drawing strength from their cultural values that include deep respect for the dead. The results imply the continued presence of WWII in Latvia – the image of Latvia is created mostly in the light of those events.

**Key words:** memoir, country image, macrostructures, keyword analysis, World War II, Latvia

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CON – CONSTRUCTION

DEL – DELETION

GEN – GENERALIZATION

KM – keyword macrostructure

M – macrostructure

## Introduction

In 2020, emigration from Latvia is a continuous process, a road that many Latvian families choose to take in the hopes of improving their lives. Inara Verzemnieks, a Latvian-American author, journalist, and scholar, born in the 1970s, is a descendant of a family that did not choose to but was forced to leave their home – Latvia. Verzemnieks, throughout her childhood, listened to her grandparents' stories of their homeland and, in 2017, published a memoir titled *Among the Living and the Dead: A Tale of Exile and Homecoming on the War Roads of Europe*, detailing her physical journey through the embodiments of her grandmother's memories and her spiritual journey through the stories about her family history.

Research in the field of country image constructed in emigrant literature has been focused on the image of the other – the image emigrees develop of their new country of residence, especially as it proves to be the stark opposite of what they believed and expected. Part of the research carried out by Miller (1978) explores the writing of two Puerto Ricans who relocated to New York in the 1940s, detailing the contrast between the perceived and actual image of both places. The research carried out by Giordano (1992) considers similar sentiments in the literary works of native Italians as they settled in their new lives in the USA. Image of the country native to the protagonist is discussed by Uphaus (2014) and Balaa (2015) analysing a literary work related to Ireland and Lebanon, respectively.

There is also a comprehensive body of research on the image of Latvia written by Latvian writers and scholars. The book *Latvia in World War II* by Valdis O. Lumans, a first-generation American who arrived in the USA as a child after his family fled Latvia during WWII, is a study on the history of Latvia during World War II, as well as an exploration on the reality behind the image of Latvia procured by his emigrant family, leading to 'this epiphany—the realization that much of what I had learned about Latvia was more myth than reality' and a creation of a new image of Latvia and Latvians, namely, that 'so many others, with far greater knowledge, deeper insights [...] than I, believed and clung faithfully to the same myth' (2006: 1). The book *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* (1998) by Vieda Skultans is a collection and analysis of spoken narrations on the memories of life under the Soviet rule, finding the parameters of Latvian identity. Images of Latvia in the eyes of Latvians who were exiled and returned among others who suffered the atrocities of WWII are discussed in Skultans' article *Theorizing Latvian lives: the quest for identity* (1997) as well. Part of the research article *Cultural nationalism in exile: the case of Polish and Latvian displaced persons* by Laura Hilton (2009) discovers the ways Latvians

attempted to preserve their identity during their time in the DP camps. Drawing from a variety of research, surveys, and memoirs, Hilton presents the elements of their identity that Latvians relied on, such as cultural traditions, folklore, history, and language. Thus, Hilton's research inadvertently reveals the image of Latvia in the eyes of the DPs as one grounded in these elements.

In Verzemnieks' memoir, Latvia is simultaneously the other and the perceived native country, thus, it is important to study the image of Latvia constructed in the memoir.

The present research was spurred by a brief interview held with Inara Verzemnieks following her lecture at the university of Latvia on 19 November 2019.

The **goal** of the present Bachelor thesis is to determine semantic macrostructures that construct the image of Latvia in Inara Verzemnieks' memoir *Among the Living and the Dead*.

One **research question** is posed:

How do the identified semantic macrostructures contribute to the generalised image of homeland developed in the memoir genre?

To achieve the goal and answer the research question, the following **enabling objectives** are set:

- 1) to analyse theoretical literature on the genre of memoir and the concept of country image;
- 2) to compile theoretical information on the notion of macrostructure and the rules of determining macrostructures;
- 3) to discuss the context of emigration and exile discussed in the selected material;
- 4) to determine macrostructures in the selected material;
- 5) to determine the image of Latvia in the selected material, based on the determined macrostructures;
- 6) to draw relevant conclusions.

The **research methods** employed in the present Bachelor's thesis are macroanalysis and keyword analysis.

The **theoretical framework** of the present Bachelor's thesis is based on Couser (2012), Yagoda (2009), Buhmann (2016), Koroļeva (2019), and van Dijk (1980).

In the **first chapter**, the findings on the term *memoir*, the features of memoir as a literary genre, and memoir as a means of homecoming are synthesized.

In the **second chapter**, country image as a notion, the factors creating country image, and the manifestation of country image through the sense of belonging in emigrant communities is discussed.

In the **third chapter**, the concept and functions of macrostructures are discussed. The rules of determining macrostructures are discovered and examples are provided.

In the **fourth chapter**, the macrostructures in the memoir *Among the Living and the Dead* are extracted by carrying out macroanalysis and keyword analysis. According to the extracted macrostructures, the image of Latvia as constructed in the memoir is determined.

## 1. Memoir as a Genre

Inara Verzemnieks, in the full version of the title, has called her book a tale – *Among the Living and the Dead: A Tale of Exile and Homecoming on the War Roads of Europe* – which implies a great deal of imagination in the writing process and exaggeration of the story (Zipes, 2006: 2). It can be assumed that Verzemnieks has called the story a tale for aesthetic or emotional purposes, for example to create the aura of adventure, but as the theoretical material considered in the present chapter shows, the book is in fact a memoir. The present chapter gives an overview of the of the term *memoir* and those adjacent to it, evidence to consider *Among the Living and the Dead* a memoir, the place of memoirs in the literary studies, the features of a memoir, as well as describes memoir as a means of homecoming; hence, the chapter combines the review of theoretical sources and the insight into the memoir under analysis.

The word *memoir* is derived from the French for *memory* (Yagoda, 2009), which reveals the basics of the genre – it deals with memories. G. Thomas Couser in *Memoir: An Introduction* definitively states that ‘memoir is not fiction. Memoirs are not novels. As a nonfiction genre, memoir depicts the lives of real, not imagined, individuals’ (2012: 15). After this has been made clear, other problems arise. As admitted by both Couser (2012) and Yagoda (2009), the terms *memoir*, *memoirs*, and *autobiography*, when used to refer to the various depictions of such real individuals bear only very subtle differences.

First, Couser offers that both *memoir* and *autobiography* can refer to ‘any account of the author’s life’ (2012: 18), as if both terms were interchangeable. However, later on the same page, he assumes that *memoir*, as distinguished from *autobiography*, ‘can be used to refer to a narrative that is primarily about someone other than the author’ (ibid.) and supports this by turning to the etymology of the word, writing that ‘memoir can only concern someone known to, and remembered by, the author. [...] It will be, or resemble, a reminiscence, consisting of personal recollections’ (2012: 19). Yagoda makes it clearer by giving a brief overview of the terms. He claims there is an unambiguous definition of *autobiography*: ‘a biography of a person written by that person’ and that *memoirs* is a synonym of *autobiography*, the explanation for the existence of these synonyms being that *memoirs* is ‘often chosen by statesmen and other eminences’ (2009: 1). *Memoir*, then, is ‘a reminiscence of others’ (Pascal, 1960 cited in Yagoda, 2009: 1), a narrative in which the author is a character (ibid.). However, Yagoda follows this up with examples from modern writers, who, while providing their own definitions of the terms at hand, have completely reversed the meanings previously made so clear (2009: 2). Possibly, as a homage to this lack of agreement, in the very first

statement of the book, Yagoda himself admits he does not precisely differentiate among the terms. Evidently, in the field of life-writing, various terms are employed, and each writer can decide on the definition themselves. However, the dichotomy presented by Yagoda is very useful for the present research and provides grounds to consider Verzemnieks' book a memoir. To add, Verzemnieks' book has various features proposed by the authors as pertinent to memoirs: the depiction of real individuals (Couser, 2012: 15), 'a narrative about someone other than the author, someone known to, and remembered by, the author' (ibid.: 18-9), a narrative in which the author is a character (Yagoda, 2009: 1). Having established the definition of the term *memoir*, the present chapter proceeds with the discussion of the popularity of memoirs and their characteristics.

G. Thomas Couser (2012) and Ben Yagoda (2009) emphasise the popularity of memoirs with Couser calling the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century 'the age of memoir' (2012: 3) and Yagoda referring to memoir as 'the central form of the culture' (2009: 18). Both express their amazement by the sheer size of the output – there are memoirs written by professional writers, sports stars, politicians, celebrities, as well as, frankly, regular people, giving rise to the 'nobody memoir' (Couser, 2012: 12), giving a louder voice to stories otherwise known in rather small circles or closed groups. Inara Verzemnieks' memoir can be considered a nobody memoir, as well and it was published in 2017 – directly in the age of the memoir.

The central theme of Verzemnieks' memoir, discovering and tracing the steps of her grandmother Livija and her sister in the aftermath of World War II, in a sense – representing their experience, perfectly embodies the emotional elements of memoirs, as discussed by Couser (2012). Couser writes that memoirs often 'arise out of intimate relationships' (2012: 11), that exist between relatives, partners or close friends, and that most of those memoirs involving relatives, but especially (grand)parents and children, 'are attempting to complete unfinished business of one sort or another' (ibid.: 12). This is supported by Yagoda who characterises memoirs as often having 'the element of a quest' (2009: 8). The argument by Yagoda is especially close to Verzemnieks' book, as she admits in the very first pages, that she travelled to her grandmother's old village, imagining that 'maybe, I might find her again in the old stories that still existed there' (Verzemnieks, 2017: 3). Thus, through the quest for her late grandmother, Verzemnieks in her memoir has done what Couser writes she would not have been able to in fiction – 'among the things memoir can do that fiction cannot is to immortalize – or at least memorialize – actual people' (2012: 14). In the process of writing down the story of her grandmother, Verzemnieks has immortalised her grandmother and her grandmother's story.

In her book, Verzemnieks writes of and through two layers of memories. Firstly, her own memories – of her childhood with her grandparents, of the conversations with her grandmother Livija, and decades later with her grandmother’s sister Ausma during summers in Latvia, of her great-grandparents farm *Lembi* as she saw it – abandoned, and as she second-hand remembered it – blooming. Secondly, Verzemnieks writes of what she remembers from listening to her grandmother’s memories describing life back in Latvia before the war. Talking about her grandparents’ house in Tacoma, Washington, she juxtaposes it to *Lembi*: ‘[...] this is the place where I learned of the existence of our true home, the one we could no longer see [...]’ (2017: 8). The grandparents’ farm is her true home. Thus, in her writing, Verzemnieks’ ‘personal past is suffused with others’ memories’ (Freeman, 2010: 263), both inseparable from one another. In a sense, Verzemnieks has acquired the feeling of indirect belonging to the farm and her grandmother’s life pre-exile.

The whole project of writing *Among the Living and the Dead* is, for Verzemnieks, a homecoming in two senses – firstly, since she has referred to her grandmother’s Latvian farm as her own true home, the arrival in Latvia to gather materials for the book is an act of physical homecoming. Secondly, in writing about her experience in Latvia and, on the basis of memories and research, writing down the story of her grandmother’s life is an emotional homecoming – the feeling of closeness and unity with her late grandmother. People can be home, as well.

Mark Freeman suggests that there is a ‘revelatory power of memory’ (2010: 272), an ability that can give ‘insight and understanding of the sort that [...] cannot occur in the immediacy of the present moment’ (ibid.). Writing a memoir gives insight into the present moments of the past, moments which one even may not have been physically part of. Thus, memories are a home of sorts and remembering is a homecoming – being able to imaginatively travel to places and moments one feels close to without having experienced them. In the quest for one’s true home and a sense of self, even if ‘partial and limited, [we] need the stories that sustain our efforts at self-definition’ (Müller-Wood and Wood, 2007: 53). Especially for the children of migrants, then, the task of self-definition is one that often involves memoir writing, ‘drawing on ancestral memories and myths, tales of distant homelands’ and driven ‘by a feeling of belonging to another place, or even another time’ (Delisle, 2011: 131), as stated by Jennifer Bowering Delisle in her research article published in the journal *Memory Studies*. In Inara Verzemnieks’ case, she, a modern 21<sup>st</sup> century second-generation American, feels a belonging to pre-WWII-Latvia.

Delisle’s article, through the analysis of a memoir very similar to *Among the Living and the Dead*, discusses the problematic of idealising faraway homelands and the subsequent

complicated relationship between the ‘inherited memories of the “homeland”’ and the reality of the ‘existing places in the present’ (2011: 132), arising out of the discrepancy between them. Similar to Verzemnieks relationship with her grandmother Livija, the author of the memoir under analysis in Delisle’s article, Caterina Edwards, after her mother’s passing, feels a duty to research her first-generation-Canadian mother’s life in an attempt to connect with her, posthumously (Delisle, 2011: 133). Because there is very little factual evidence of her family’s forced exile during World War II, Edwards travels to their actual home, the territory of former Istria, currently in Croatia (ibid.). Delisle characterizes that for both Edwards and her mother (in the same way that the farm *Lembi* is to Verzemnieks and her grandmother), Istria is imaginary – for Edwards because it is a “‘fantasy” of the past’, for her mother because ‘of the distance of nostalgic memory’ (ibid.). Istria is seen by Edwards as her true homeland, the homeland of her family – ‘the imagined and abstract concept of “home” grounded in a physical place’ (Basu, 2007: 1 cited in Delisle, 2011: 133). The concept of homeland, a place somewhere far away from the present home, is an immensely important concept to migrant families, perpetuated by stories and memories. The quest to find the homeland and feel the emotions pertaining to it, as per the stories, both for Edwards and Verzemnieks is fulfilled through their writing.

The previously mentioned problematic relationship between the two versions of the homeland – the idealised one and the real one, comes into effect when the children of emigrants travel to the places their families left and find both versions to be unrecognisably different. ‘The second generation can only experience the ruin, never the original,’ Delisle (2011: 137) explains. The ruin, then, is a painful reminder of the distance and an almost insurmountable obstacle. The fragmentariness of the present, the breakdown of the actual home, the lack of definitive documental evidence, and often the lack of people to interview makes it impossible to reconstruct the past as it happened while remaining truthful to the history and to the people. Delisle writes on the object of her analysis: ‘Edwards is aware that a perfect narrative can never be recovered or reconstructed’ (2011: 136), and adds that the distance – in time, as well as geographically, ‘ultimately demonstrat[es] the second generation’s inability to fully understand the past and emphasiz[es] the irreversible passage of time’ (2011: 136). The distance is simply too great for the memoirists to return to the happy days of their ancestors. Yet, they try.

Delisle (2011) writes that even if the physical properties of the homeland rarely respond to the acquired memories of it, the nostalgia remains. She calls it “‘genealogical nostalgia”, the second generation’s longing for the times and places of their ancestor’s stories, a nostalgia drawn [...] out of the very gaps between personal memory and genealogical legacies’ (2011:

138). As the concept of the homeland distances itself from the physical realm and moves onto the emotional one, the memoir becomes part of the larger history of displaced families. According to Delisle (2011), the central element in such memoirs, then, is the second-generation's place between the past and the present as a connector of both realities and the one filling the gaps of the past to come to terms with the present and the future. Delisle writes that for Edwards, in coming to terms with her mother's past, 'there is a sense of resolution, not in the journeys to Istria, but in this very process of searching – in the symbolic journey, in other words, of writing the memoir' (2011: 142). Thus, the writing of the memoir is a means of homecoming. It involves the return to the homeland but is not limited to it. The homecoming is emotional and spiritual, as well, it is the learning of the history of one's family and the understanding of one's place in it.

Memoir – life-writing dealing with personal memories, is the genre of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, allowing many different stories to be heard. The element of a quest in memoirs gives purpose to the process, with the authors often resolving to mend relationships or find closure with loved ones that have passed away. Researching and reconstructing family histories after resettlement in faraway lands, memoir-writing is a means of dealing with nostalgia, and a means of return to the homeland, which more often than not reveals a clash between the memories and reality. The discrepancy is most evident as the images created in one's mind do not correspond to the present. Thus, the next chapter discusses images and their impact on feelings towards one's homeland.

## 2. Country Image

A great part of *Among the Living and the Dead* deals with the image of Latvia, the homeland of Inara Verzemnieks' grandparents, that evolved in Verzemnieks' mind when she was a child and that materialised as she visited Latvia. In this chapter, the concept of country image and its manifestation through the sense of belonging is discussed, as well as the factors creating country images, and the importance of these images in the integration of emigrant communities. The present chapter attempts to answer the following questions - What is image? How is it created? What does it mean? - and thereby alongside Chapter 1 accommodates the posed research question as to how the semantic macrostructures, that will be identified in the empirical part of the research, contribute to the image of homeland established in the memoir genre.

The concept of country image is studied in various fields. Alexander Buhmann in his doctoral thesis *Measuring Country Image: Theory, Method, and Effects* states that the analysis of country images is of importance in communication science, as well as 'Business Studies, Social Psychology, Political Science [and] Public Diplomacy' (2016: 15). This introduces the idea that country image is a complex construct, influencing and influenced by many different factors. Buhmann relies on the definition given by Barich and Kotler (1991: 95) that country image is 'the sum of beliefs, attitudes, and impressions that a person or group of persons has of an object' (2016: 38), for the purposes of this research the object being a country.

Images are a powerful tool in the race for wealth and popularity. Buhmann writes that 'people base their decisions and actions toward social entities on their cognitive representations (images) of these entities' (2016: 17) and that that these representations largely determine 'the way individuals, organizations and countries can function' (ibid.). To add, on the level of countries, these determinations are made by foreign societies (ibid.). Image, then, becomes the most important asset of a country and affects people's attitude towards a specific country (ibid.). In the context of migration, people, the native of one country, relocate to another and thus become the other to the country of origin or to their families, but still try to preserve the image of their homeland.

The context of migration complicates the discussion of country images, for the distinction of perspective referred to by Buhmann and proposed by Grunig (1993) who emphasises that 'there should be a clear conceptual distinction between *outside-perception* (by foreign publics) and *self-perception* (of a domestic population)' (2016: 38). Buhmann explains that self-perception is part of 'country identity [...] existing among a country's domestic public (in-group)' (2016: 39). As previously mentioned, when migrants relocate,

they are simultaneously part of two publics and are in both the out-group (having a country image) and the in-group (having a country identity) of both of the locations. On this duality of perspective, Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan writes: ‘The exilic mode of being, a living on boundary-lines, produces a constant relativization of one’s home, one’s culture, one’s language, and one’s self’ (2010: 441). Buhmann reiterates that ‘in their [migrants] constitution, both constructs, image and identity, are interrelated’ (2016: 39). However, while acknowledging the inter-relatedness of both constructs, the present research focuses on the *country images* held by emigrees and their descendants.

Ilze Koroļeva in Chapter 4 of the book *The Emigrant Communities of Latvia*, titled *The Complex Identities of Latvians Abroad: What Shapes a Migrant’s Sense of Belonging?* (2019) discusses factors that influence migrants’ sense of belonging to Latvia and to the new country of residence. Among others, the factors are ‘involvement in the organisations of Latvian diaspora’, ‘life satisfaction’, and ‘trust in the government’ (2019: 82). These factors are in the frontline of building certain country images that determine the attitude of emigrees towards Latvia and the new country of residence.

Koroļeva (2019) in her research, using the data gathered from the survey carried out by *The Emigrant Communities of Latvia* and employing cluster analysis, has distinguished four groups in which Latvian emigrants can be divided, all the subject of certain factors and images influencing their attitude. The first cluster analysed is the ‘well integrated’ group (Koroļeva, 2019: 76). The author writes that this group ‘includes respondents that are well integrated into their current country of residence and felt a very strong sense of belonging to it’ (ibid.). However, the representatives of this group also feel ‘strongly attached to Latvia, to inhabitants of Latvia and to people from Latvia abroad’ (ibid.), which means that they have developed both a positive image of the new country of residence and maintain a positive image of their former country of residence – Latvia. One of the factors for positive attitude towards the host country in direct proportion is the time spent there – the longer the individuals have lived in the host country, the greater their sense of belonging (ibid.: 77). Koroļeva writes that the most significant factor in ‘the differentiation of dimensions of belonging’ (ibid.) is family – it ties ‘an individual emotionally to a particular place where the family lives’ (ibid.). This emphasises the complexity of belonging and the fact that country images while quite general can also be very individual, pertaining to each person’s circumstances. Another factor that the researcher mentions that influences the sense of belonging and that the author of the present thesis finds to be related to the country image is ‘dimensions of trust’: ‘trust in the government of Latvia, its mass media, police and courts; trust in the host country’s government [...]’ (ibid.). To elaborate, the assessment of a

country's economy and 'its political system' are significant factors in the study of 'the effects of country images', according to Buhmann (2016: 30). The impact economic and political issues have on the attitude people have towards a country is exemplified in the second cluster analysed by Koroļeva (2019).

The second cluster in the analysis done by Koroļeva is the 'home-rejecting' group (2019: 78). The author characterises this group as 'alienated [...] towards everything related to Latvia', describes that this group experiences 'a strong negative attitude towards their country of origin' and strong 'belonging to the inhabitants of the host country,' as opposed to the inhabitants of their home country (ibid.). The results of the survey show that people belonging to the home-rejecting group were driven to leave their country due to economic instability which brought 'social vulnerability' and 'a desire to improve their quality of life' (ibid.). Thus, it is evident that there is a high 'probability of negative associations when thinking of Latvia' (ibid.), meaning that, as mentioned above, economic and political matters can greatly influence the country image.

The third cluster, 'host-rejecting' are described as feeling 'weak belonging to the host country', but strong 'belonging to Latvia' (Koroļeva, 2019: 79). The author describes that the respondents associated with this group feel strong attachment to their childhood home and their home prior to emigrating. Evidently, the host-rejecting migrants maintain a positive image of Latvia, even though in most cases they left the country due to financial problems (ibid.). One of the factors for the migrants' rejection of the host country was strong attachment to close family at home (ibid.: 80), which may be regarded as the founding material of positive image of the home country. Koroļeva points out that 'increased discontent with certain spheres of life can strengthen a migrant's sense of belonging to their country of origin' (ibid.). It means that, as in the citation of Erdinast-Vulcan (2010) found in the previous page, through relativisation, the migrants' images can be strengthened and that strong negative experiences in the host country may create stronger positive images of home.

The fourth and last cluster, the 'home-leaning' one is very close to the 'well-integrated' one, in terms of their generally positive attitude (image) towards Latvia and lack of distinctly negative attitude (image) towards the host country (Koroļeva, 2019: 80). In this group, the significance of the childhood home or the home in Latvia again is an important factor in the development of a strong sense of belonging to Latvia (ibid.: 81). 'Having close friends back home' (ibid.) also helps the creation of a positive image towards the native country. Koroļeva concludes that 'the "home-leaning" migrants had more trust in Latvian institutions than other groups' which underlines the positive feelings towards 'anything Latvian' (ibid.) and serves

as a testament to the fact discussed by Buhmann (2016) that economic and political situation greatly impacts the creation of country images.

To conclude, image is an attitude that people have towards something they are not part of. In the case of countries, image is the attitude of people evaluating the country from afar and their attitude is the total sum of many factors, but most importantly the economic and politic situation. For people, country images often have to do with people living in those countries – close friends or family create a positive image of the country, lack of friends or family creates a neutral or unattractive image. Migrants are in a position where they are creating images of something they used to be a part of, meaning that very personal details, such as friends and family, and the memories of childhood home take part in the image creation. In the next chapter, a method to analyse the presence of images in writing – macrostructures – is discussed.

### 3. Macrostructures

According to the set goal, the present Bachelor thesis is devised to determine the semantic macrostructures that construct the image of Latvia. Thus, it is necessary to explore the concept of macrostructure, as well as the rules and process of determining and organising macrostructures. In this chapter, the notion of macrostructure, its functions and the rules of organising information in terms of macrostructures are discussed, the examples of applying the rules are given as well. The theoretical information is gathered relying on the writing of one of the most prominent authors in the field, Teun A. van Dijk.

The analysis of macrostructures as a research method appears in studies on literary works and media, as well as in the field of education, where the ability to create and recognise macrostructures is analysed.

A research article by Robin W. Erwin Jr., published in 1985, not long after the publication of van Dijk's theory, provided an overview of several studies on reading comprehension, all relying on the microstructure-to-macrostructure model provided by van Dijk. The ethnographical study of a classroom by Stokrocki (1998) through the application of macrorules to Turkish children's stories revealed the different ways of storytelling and the results of macroanalysis allowed the author to construct country images.

The construction of images through macrostructures in media reports is present in the research by Erjavec (2001) and Le (2002). The research carried out by Erjavec (2001) affirmed that semantic macrostructures construct an image and the findings of the research showed that the negative image of the Roma among the population of Slovenia was consciously created by the media. The research carried out by Le (2002) discovered the image of Russia in the editorials of the French newspaper *Le Monde* identifying and analysing major categories of macrostructures and keywords, similarly to the research carried out in the present Bachelor's thesis.

The analysis of macrostructures in literary works is present in the research by Doležel (1983) who identified the common semantic macrostructure of Franz Kafka's novels *The Trial* and *The Castle*. The research carried out by Hart (2002) has identified macrostructures in James Joyce's *Wandering Rocks* to highlight the wider-scale analogies present in Joyce's writing.

As the studies mentioned above show, the analysis of macrostructures is a topical research method, one that can be applied in various fields and to different types of texts, revealing images and patterns present in the analysed texts. In the preface to his study *Macrostructures: An Interdisciplinary Study of Global Structures in Discourse, Interaction,*

*and Cognition*, Teun A. van Dijk reveals his observation that ‘in several disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, various notions of “global” units and structures play an important role’ (1980: V). Among other disciplines, van Dijk writes, cognitive psychology heavily relies on ‘the global organization of complex information’ (ibid.) This organisation, then, is done in terms of macrostructures, which the scholar defines as ‘higher level semantic or conceptual structures that organize the “local” microstructures of discourse, interaction, and their cognitive processing’ (ibid.) and ‘structures that are required in the understanding, organization, and reduction of complex information’ (ibid.: VI). It is evident that macrostructures, corresponding to the *macro-* part of their name, deal with organisation of information on a larger scale, being general rather than specific.

The first to use the term *macrostructure*, albeit with a slightly different meaning, one corresponding to the present-day concept of superstructure, was German linguist Manfred Bierwisch in 1965, van Dijk (1980: VI) notes. Other pioneers in the use of the term have been Gordon H. Bower and Walter Kintsch, both in papers published in 1974 (ibid.). At the time of conducting his study, van Dijk emphasised that the theory was still new and not completely developed (ibid.). At the time of writing the present Bachelor thesis in 2020, no new significant theoretical developments of macrostructures have been published. However, it is worth mentioning the book *Models of Understanding Text* edited by Bruce K. Britton and Arthur C. Graesser, first published in 1996 (republished in 2014) that deals with modelling the processing of discourse and text comprehension, linguistic actions related to macrostructures. Thus, there is reason to still consider the theory new and rely on van Dijk’s considerations.

Attempting to arrive at a more definite concept of macrostructures, van Dijk first assesses the intuitive understanding of the phenomenon, considering the developments in the social sciences, namely, research that studies ‘the explicit indications exhibited by social participants of the ways they interpret and categorize their cognitive and social reality’ (1980: 1). Thus, van Dijk has the basis to presume that this intuitive understanding has ‘a cognitive basis’, which allows to conclude that the way people act and use language is largely determined by the way ‘[language users and social participants] perceive, interpret, know, memorize, evaluate, plan, produce, etc., their discourses and interactions’ (ibid.: 2). Global structures, then, are the outcome of the process of understanding and organising the highly informative and demanding social environment (ibid.). Van Dijk explains that ‘global structures are cognitively based but the cognitive principles involved develop under social constraints’ (ibid.: 3). Thus, the existence of global structures is based on the synthesis of cognition and the social rules that restrain it.

To reach a better conceptual understanding of the term *global structure*, it is useful to consider its opposition – *local structure*, this distinction is based on the opposition between whole and part (van Dijk, 1980: 3). The scholar writes that ‘we take global structures to be a kind of (w)holistic structure, and we say that the parts, members, etc., “make up,” “constitute,” “form,” or “compose” them’ (ibid.). The unity between these parts is internally expressed through coherence and externally through their separation from other objects, e.g., other texts (ibid.). Thus, global structures are made up of local structures and both of these concepts, working together, create a unity and ensure overall understanding and transmission of information.

In discourse theory, the term *macrostructure* is the representation of ‘various notions of global meaning, such as topic, theme, or gist’ (van Dijk, 1980: 10). The scholar argues that this implies that ‘macrostructures in discourse are semantic objects’ (ibid.) – items carrying meaning. This leads to the necessity of rules that would ‘relate meanings of words and sentences (i.e., local structures) to the semantic macrostructures’ (ibid.) (i.e., global structures). It means that even though the relationship is obvious, the process of determining global structures from local structures is not straightforward – guidelines are needed. To continue, in discourse theory, macrostructures ‘account for coherence’ (ibid.) as mentioned above. A text is coherent ‘not only at the local level (e.g., by pairwise connections between sentences) but also at the global level’ (ibid.). Macrostructures reveal and overtly explain the relations between otherwise intuitively related notions such as ‘global meaning, global reference, topic, or theme’ (van Dijk, 1980: 10) – notions that involve the need for the understanding of social realities people live in. To add, the analysis of macrostructures is required to carry out rather mundane tasks in language use as well, such as making ‘abstracts or summaries’ (ibid.). In the same way, other ‘summarizing features of the discourse itself’ can be defined in terms of macrostructures, for example, ‘thematical sentences, titles and subtitles, conclusions, and key words’ (ibid.). Evidently, macrostructures in discourse work not only at the higher level of cognition, but also at the lower level of physical text organisation.

Still, van Dijk emphasises that even though it is possible to break up a sentence into smaller, local structures – simple conveyors of information, it ‘does not mean that the “global sentence structure” is taken as a kind of macrostructure’ (1980: 12). In discourse, semantic macrostructures are large scale items that work with ‘complex and hypercomplex’ sets of information that are not the subject of short-term memory, ‘such as discourse, conversation, action sequences, complex thinking and problem solving [...]’ (ibid.). The distinction between simple and complex information – simple and complex structures – is relevant in the

development of a ‘theoretical notion of macrostructure’ (ibid.: 13). For this reason, van Dijk introduces a term antonymous to *macrostructures – microstructures*, which are the smaller, local structures mentioned above, ‘such as the meanings of words, phrases, clauses, and simple actions’ (1980: 13). Through this relativisation, the scholar comes to another definition of macrostructures: ‘Macrostructures are global semantic information only relative to the microstructures of discourse, cognition, and interaction’ (ibid.). This definition suggests that microstructures and macrostructures are what they are only in their particular context, and one can conclude that these terms can be swapped in the larger context of the whole – macrostructures can be regarded as microstructures in a larger-scale, multi-level analysis.

The term *level*, then, introduces the idea that ‘macrostructures characterize the higher or more abstract levels of semantic information [...]’, as well as ‘the possibility of having several macrostructural levels’ (van Dijk, 1980: 13). Macrostructures being at a higher level responds to the intuitive idea that global constructs reflect the information less specifically and on a larger scale (ibid.). The scholar indicates that ‘the macrostructure thus has to represent what is the major, more relevant, more general information *out* of complex information as represented at the more concrete microlevel’ (ibid.). The levels of macrostructures are always ‘systematically related’ in the analysis of complex information and the higher levels are either ‘derived or inferred’ from the ones below them (ibid.). Macrostructures are by design the higher levels of items that carry meaning, but the macrostructures themselves can be generalised, distancing the point of view and building higher levels of meaning, relative to the lower ones.

Macrostructures in discourse have certain functions that allow to differentiate between different sets of discourse, that help to navigate the information, and allow for independent creation. The first function that van Dijk describes is the function of ‘organiz[ing] complex (micro)-information’ (1980: 14). The organising of information helps to ‘form larger chunks [of information] that have their proper meaning and function’ (ibid.). Without this possibility, ‘we would only be able to have a large number of links between information units at the local level’ (ibid.), meaning that people would be able to grasp the link between two sentences, but would not be able to assess the point of a short story or newspaper article, or even grasp where one article ends and the next begins. As the scholar explains, ‘due to macrostructures, discourses, conversations, and action sequences are planned and understood as coherent wholes and hence as a unit that may as such be identified and distinguished from other, similar, objects’ (ibid.). The presence of macrostructures has cognitive implications, as well – only due to the existence of organisation of information through macrostructures, people can store complex sets of information in and retrieve it from their memory (ibid.). The

macrostructural function of organisation may be the most important function, for its presence is almost unnoticed because it is so natural. Through macrostructures, the mind organises and stores large amounts of information in a way that this information is understandable and retrievable. For example, one is able to read a book that tells a coherent story. Each sentence or paragraph does not necessarily correlate to the one before, but together they form a united idea.

The second function of macrostructures is closely related to the first and one cannot exist without the other. ‘The reduction of complex information’ (van Dijk, 1980: 14) is a way to handle the information that was understood (organised). This function also is the very essence of macrostructures. Van Dijk reminds that macrostructures ‘should feature the more important, relevant, abstract, or general information from a complex information unit. This is possible because microinformation is “disregarded”’ (1980: 14). Reduction of specific details with minor influence on the main idea improves the ‘storage of complex information’ and ‘allow[s] the adequate use of such information’ to recall, recognize information, answer questions, solve problems, summarise, paraphrase, etc. (ibid.). The scholar concludes that ‘fast and efficient processing of complex information in cognition, communication, and interaction therefore mainly takes place at the macrostructural level’ (ibid.). Thus, to continue with the example offered at the end of the previous paragraph, the person who has read the book will not remember the types of trees that were described as growing in the forest in an episode, or the amount of time the woman spent at her grandmother’s house, but the reader will remember the general information – that it is a story about a woman traveling to her grandmother’s native country and former home.

Van Dijk adds that macrostructures have an inherent ‘semantic function’ (1980: 15) – as higher-level meaning is derived from meaning at the lower level, ‘construction of new meaning’ (ibid.) becomes possible. Thus, macrostructures not only regard the information readily available, but allow to create new knowledge and certain evaluation of it, and comprehend the information in multiple ways, considering other information stored. Hence, the reader from the example may infer that the woman is not traveling for the purpose of traveling, but she is looking to relive her grandmother’s memories in the place they originated.

The aforementioned functions and most importantly the function of reduction is carried out in terms of ‘reduction rules’ that van Dijk has named ‘macrorules’ (1980: 14). Before analysing the macrorules, van Dijk introduces the notion of *proposition*, a term that in his writing is used to represent ‘the semantic structures defining texts, action, and cognition, both at the micro- and the macrolevel’ (ibid.: 16). The scholar writes that the term ‘has found wide

acceptance in several disciplines' and, thus, can be considered a useful and widely understandable referent to, in this case, semantic units (ibid.: 17). The scholar states that macrorules are the somewhat 'more general rules that link textual propositions with the macropropositions used to define the global topic of a fragment' (ibid.: 46). In other words, macrorules explain the process how general ideas are built from the actual text. Van Dijk writes that those are 'semantic derivation or inference rules: They derive macrostructures from microstructures' (ibid.). The rules are characterised as reductive (some details are disregarded), constructive (elements may be combined to create new information units), and organisational (they organise smaller units to belong to larger units) (ibid.). To add, through the application of macrorules, 'we make inferences about the background of the events, the character of the participants involved, the social frame being instantiated', etc (ibid.: 54). Thus, the given information is not simply reduced, but used to construct information at a higher level (ibid.). Macrorules are rules that determine the way macroanalysis is carried out. Their various functions ensure the comprehensive text analysis aiming at determining the main idea.

The first macrorule that van Dijk describes is that of DELETION – 'the simplest and at the same time most general macrorule' (1980: 46). DELETION 'deletes all those propositions of the text base which are not relevant for the interpretation of other propositions of the discourse' (ibid.). Namely, it is the act of eliminating redundant, minor details that do not influence the constitution of the main idea. To make it clearer, the scholar offers to consider the rule of DELETION the other way around – not that some information is disposed of, but that some information is found to be more important and is preserved. Thus, the rule of DELETION is at the same time the rule of SELECTION – it 'selects from a text base all propositions which are interpretation conditions (presuppositions) of other propositions in the text base' (van Dijk, 1980: 47). In other words, the rule of SELECTION determines which information is relevant for the understanding of the main idea. Thus, the rule of DELETION/SELECTION concerns primarily the "irrelevant details" of a description, that is, details that do not contribute to the construction of a theme or topic' (ibid.). The following sentence and a brief analysis done by van Dijk presenting the way irrelevant details appear in texts and the reasons for disregarding them, show where and why the rule of DELETION/SELECTION should be employed:

(16) The meeting went on forever. Outside it was snowing

In these examples we observe various kinds of detail. In (16) the topic of the first sentence is 'the meeting,' which apparently is also part of the theme of the sequence, because of the definite article and because of the presupposition that the meeting was

held (and taking a long time). Reference to the snow outside in that case is not thematically related to the meeting at all, neither as a component nor as a normal condition or consequence [...]. Rather we here have a kind of descriptive or illustrative detail, implicitly mentioning the thoughts or observations of some participant of the meeting [...]. This detail, hence, may at most be a characterization of the *background* of the global event going on (viz., a description of the weather). In any description of ‘what happened’ when we later would describe the meeting, reference to the snow outside would be irrelevant. (1980: 44-5)

The scholar mentions the imagined scenario of describing the event at a later time, which is a useful mechanism to adopt in case of doubt whether a piece of information is relevant. In the retelling of a story, only the most important information – the macrostructures holding the main idea – is related. Van Dijk continues:

In other words, texts may express propositions which can be interpreted relative to other propositions but which are in no way a normal or necessary aspect of the events described but rather a *casual* observation (e.g., in order to enhance the degree of realistic description). Such events or states may be background detail, description of participants, or in general all those facts that could in principle be left out without changing the interpretation of surrounding sentences. (1980: 45)

Thus, the employing of DELETION/SELECTION is the process of looking at the bigger picture and understanding the relevance of the semantic units as part of the main idea.

The second macrorule that van Dijk proposes is GENERALIZATION (1980: 47). As opposed to DELETION, when employing this rule, irrelevant details are not left out, but are ‘abstract[ed] from semantic detail in the respective sentences by constructing a proposition that is conceptually more general’ (ibid.). It means that information is made less specific. GENERALIZATION is carried out by grouping the subjects of the proposition and subsuming the predicates ‘under a common denominator, denoting the superset of the property or relation denoted’ (van Dijk, 1980: 47). Thus, the more nuanced versions of nouns and verbs are grouped under nouns and verbs that focus on the overall main notions. Van Dijk offers the following fragment to demonstrate how the rule of GENERALIZATION is applied:

(19) John was playing with his top. Mary was building a sand castle, and Sue was blowing soap bubbles.

In this example, the respective sentences do not denote events which are conditionally linked or which are components of each other. [...] Yet, intuitively, we are able to construct a proposition that at a higher level of abstraction subsumes the three events (e.g., ‘The children were playing’). Characteristic for this kind of link between the text base and its topic is the fact that *each* sentence entails (that is, semantically implies) the proposition ‘A child is playing.’ In other words, the topical macroproposition is a *generalization* with respect to the more specific propositions expressed by the text: Individuals are grouped into a collective argument, and the predicate is a generalization of the more specific predicates. (1980: 46)

In the provided example, three microstructures (sentences) which seemingly were not related, were generalised to create one macrostructure ‘The children were playing’ – the actions prescribed to the actors are ones that are common among children, thus the actors were generalised to be ‘children’, and their actions were generalised to be ‘playing.’ The rule of GENERALIZATION, similarly to DELETION, opts to leave behind some of the information that is irrelevant in the search for the main idea.

The third macrorule is the rule of CONSTRUCTION (van Dijk, 1980: 48). When employing this rule, micropropositions are considered to be a part of a whole and, thus, are substituted by a ‘proposition that denotes a global fact of which the micropropositions denote normal components, conditions, or consequences’ (ibid.). The newly constructed ‘macroproposition denotes a more or less stereotypical sequence of events’, the knowledge of which can be discussed in the terms of ‘frames or scripts’ – socially accepted modes of action. This indicates that propositions describing ‘facts that are not conventionally known [...] are not handled by this rule’ (ibid.). The scholar notes that CONSTRUCTION may appear to be similar to DELETION, but explains that the difference between both rules lies in the particularities of the CONSTRUCTION rule which are that it does not merely leave out and preserve some of the information, it constructs a novel one, based on the joint purpose of the actions described – ‘a new proposition must be constructed, involving a new predicate to denote the complex event described by the respective propositions of the text’ (ibid.). However, as illustrated in the example sentence and analysis carried out by van Dijk, it is possible that the constructed macroproposition is the same as one of the micropropositions in the case if one of the sentences is quite general in itself. The example follows:

(13) John was ill. He called the doctor.

[...] The only apparent identity showing in surface structure is referential: *John* and *he* refer to the same individual being a participant [...]. In a sense, indeed, we may say that the sequence (13), *as a whole, is about John*. Yet, [...] we would be reluctant to identify ‘John’ as the topic of the discourse as a whole. [...] Text (13) is not simply used as an arbitrary story about John, with the only purpose to illustrate what kind of person John is like. [...] For the second sentence, however, this [John’s illness] is not obvious, because this sentence refers to another person, the doctor, and to some action of John (calling). [...], John’s illness is not merely a background fact for the second fact, but calling a doctor is a *normal component* or *consequence* of being ill. [...], intuitively, we would answer the question about the topic for this text with something like ‘John is ill’ or ‘John’s illness.’ In other words [...] there may be a proposition that ‘holds’ for both sentences of the text and in this case that this proposition may also be expressed in the text itself. The first sentence, so to speak, is a *topical* or *thematical sentence*. (1980: 41-3)

The above example and analysis describe the process of determining the common knowledge frames that determine the macrostructures in the given sentences. The rule of CONSTRUCTION was applied, relying on the knowledge of the situation of being ill.

The fourth and final macrorule is the ZERO rule that ‘leaves propositions ‘intact’ by admitting them directly at the macrolevel’ (van Dijk, 1980: 48). The ZERO rule is applied mostly in short texts ‘where microstructure and macrostructure simply may coincide: Everything said [...] is equally relevant or important, as in simple orders like “Come home!”’ (ibid.: 49). If in the example mentioned above with the rule of CONSTRUCTION the second sentence (He called the doctor.) were not present and the text consisted only of the first sentence (John was ill.), it would be possible to apply the ZERO rule, for all of the information is relevant.

After the discussion of the macrorules, van Dijk adds some guidelines for the application of the rules. The first guideline is that it is possible to apply the rules not only to microstructures in the creation of macrostructures, but also to macrostructures themselves in the creation of the next level of macrostructures. However, the levels are not endless and the macrorules ‘should reduce and organize information [...] only up to a certain upper bound’ so that specific information is not lost (1980: 49). Second is the order of rules. The scholar suggests first to apply CONSTRUCTION ‘to see whether subsequent propositions can jointly be taken as representations of facts that constitute a global fact’ (ibid.: 50). Then DELETION/SELECTION may take place by disregarding the irrelevant information. In the case when CONSTRUCTION is not applicable, the scholar suggests GENERALIZATION before DELETION/SELECTION (van Dijk, 1980: 50). Thirdly, the scholar reminds that in GENERALIZATION and CONSTRUCTION novel propositions must be created, ‘with higher-level predicates’ (ibid.). These rules can only apply ‘if indeed there exist more global concepts’ (ibid.). Hence, if concepts at a higher level do not exist in the language, the rules cannot be applied (ibid.). Finally, the scholar emphasises that ‘the very notion of relevance used previously is not a general and objective notion but depends on all kinds of contextual factors, such as the knowledge, beliefs, tasks, goals, and interests of language users’ (ibid.). Van Dijk explains that ‘the derivation of macropropositions is very much *socioculturally* determined’ (ibid.: 55) and the application of macrorules is ‘partly intuitive’ (ibid.: 73). This provides for the situation when people may construct different macrostructures of one text, basing their decisions in their personal knowledge of the world. (ibid.: 50). Macrorules determine the actions to take in the analysis of a text, but as the analysis guidelines proposed by van Dijk show, inaccurate application of the rules, as well as varying perspectives of the language users may yield different results.

Macrostructures are global, higher-level semantic structures that reveal the main idea of a discourse beyond specific details. Certain macrorules such as DELETION/SELECTION, GENERALIZATION, CONSTRUCTION, and ZERO RULE work with propositions – lower level semantic units – and guide the researcher towards a more precise development of the macrostructures. The above-mentioned macrorules express the main functions of macrostructures as well – reduction, organisation, and construction of information. Still, the analysis of macrostructures is very contextual and somewhat subjective. It relies on the language user's knowledge of the world and the social norms and schemes that have been commonly accepted.

The next chapter reveals and discusses the findings of the empirical part of the present Bachelor's thesis, the macro- and keyword analysis of Inara Verzemnieks' memoir *Among the Living and the Dead*.

## 4. Image of Latvia in *Among the Living and the Dead*

The goal of the present Bachelor's thesis is to determine semantic macrostructures that construct the image of Latvia in Inara Verzemnieks' memoir *Among the Living and the Dead*. The present chapter reveals the historical context of the events described in the memoir, while the research methodology section, comprising the research methods, describes the selected material and the procedure of the research. This chapter presents the determined macrostructures and keywords in the selected material and discusses the constructed image.

### 4.1. Historical context

The events described in the book mostly concern the migration of the author's family members in the 20<sup>th</sup> century caused by major world events, such as the onset and consequences of World War II, the occupation of Latvia by Russian, German, and then again Russian forces, including the various violent methods of disposing of people deemed dangerous or unworthy of life, and finally the second proclamation of the independence of Latvia. The following is a brief overview of the history of migration in Latvia and Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the knowledge of which is essential for determining macrostructures.

Mihails Hazans in the chapter *Emigration from Latvia: A Brief History and Driving Forces in the Twenty-First Century* in *The Emigrant Communities of Latvia* (2019) writes that in the years 1925 to 1938 there was a 'low intensity of migration' due to the overall satisfaction with life and the time of peace after Latvian declaration of independence in 1918 (2019: 39). The moment of calm was offset by the overall devastating effects of World War II, making 'the decade between 1939 and 1949 [...] an era of displaced persons and refugees for Latvia' (ibid.). After the occupation of Latvia and its forced incorporation into the USSR, 'on 14 June, 1941, 15, 424 people [...] were deported as "class enemies" by the Soviet regime' (ibid.: 40). This marked the beginning of forced relocations of Latvian citizens. When in June 1941, already at the time of World War II, the USSR was invaded by Germany 'and Latvia was occupied by the Nazis', approximately 53,000 people were prompted to 'leave Latvia for other regions of the USSR' (ibid.), effectively becoming refugees. Hazans writes that 'most refugees (like Verzemnieks' grandmother – auth.), as well as members of the Latvian Legion who had served as soldiers in the German army (like Verzemnieks' grandfather – auth.), ended up in Displaced Persons camps' and as the camps closed, moved to countries ready to take them in: the USA received approximately 45,000 refugees, the UK

about 17,000 and others were relocated to Australia, Canada, Germany, Sweden, South America and elsewhere (Hazans, 2019: 40).

Relocation continued under the renewed Soviet regime. The population of Latvia grew due to the ‘inflow (partly centrally managed) of migrants from other parts of the Soviet Union’, as the Union needed to replace the workers they had exiled or that had fled (ibid.). However, the growth of the population was halted in the next wave of deportations, exiling ‘42,125 people (2.2% of population) to Siberia or the Far East of the USSR on 25 March, 1949’ (ibid.). It is this wave that extracted Verzemnieks’ grandmother’s family from their home in Gulbene. ‘Mostly in 1956-1957 [...] around 80% of those exiled in 1949 returned to Latvia’ (ibid.). Among those who returned, were Verzemnieks’ family, as described in the memoir.

In the decade after the restoration of the independence of Latvia in 1990, some ‘ethnic Latvians (both from the West and from the CIS countries)’ moved back to Latvia (ibid.), but many, including Verzemnieks’ grandparents, did not. Koroļeva explains that ‘amount of time spent abroad has a significant impact on the formation of an individual’s sense of belonging’ (2019: 77). In this case, many of the migrants had been living in their new countries of residence for about 40 years, having built new lives, formed new relationships, created families, and having accepted that place as their home.

The twentieth century brought considerable, unplanned, and often forced changes to people’s lives. As Latvia was re- and re-occupied until it regained independence, its citizens were thrown around and some never returned, re-building their lives abroad.

## **4.2. Methodology**

In the methodology part of the present Bachelor’s thesis, the research methods are revealed, the description of the analysed text is given, and the procedure of carrying out the research is described.

The present section of the subchapter on methodology deals with research validity and reliability. Joseph A. Maxwell uses the term validity to refer to the ‘correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account’ (2005: 106), thus the validity of the research must be established to ensure that the findings are truthful. One important threat to validity, discussed by Maxwell, is ‘researcher bias’ or ‘the subjectivity of the researcher’ (2005: 108). The present Bachelor’s thesis employs a research method – macroanalysis – that in itself is rather subjective and heavily relies on the researcher’s knowledge of the world, thus, the method not only allows for subjectivity but

requires it. However, to minimise the effects of subjectivity on the results, triangulation of methods is used, employing a quantitative research method – keyword analysis, thus, supporting the subjective findings with objective findings. The validity of the present research is ensured by the appropriate choice of research methods and solid quality of the corpus.

Research reliability is described by Franklin, Cody, and Ballan as ‘the degree to which other researchers performing similar observations [...] and analysis [...] would generate similar interpretations and results’ (2010: 356). The scholars state that the choice of research methods that takes care that ‘the interpretations of data are empirical, logical, and replicable is important to increasing reliability’ (ibid.: 355). Careful consideration of research methods can be found in the present research as well, where the selected material has been analysed via two research methods, thus obtaining more reliable results. The cross-checking of results via two research methods in the present research establishes the reliability of the research and allows to speculate that should the research be repeated, similar findings would be reproduced.

#### **4.2.1. Research method**

The first part of the empirical research was carried out by employing macroanalysis. T. A. van Dijk defines that macroanalysis is ‘the analysis of macrostructures in texts and of the ways such structures are derived from the microstructure’ (1980: 51).

To ensure the accuracy of the findings from macroanalysis, a second research method of analysing the selected material was chosen – keyword analysis. Bettina Fischer-Starcke writes that ‘identifying lexical patterns [keywords] in a text therefore contributes to decoding its meaning’ (year: 67). As was the case in the present research, ‘the identification of these patterns often depends on automatic, that is, computerized, analyses’ (ibid.). The keyword extraction and quantitative analysis of the same with the respective pre-modifiers was performed by using NVivo software.

#### **4.2.2. Description of the texts analysed**

In the present Bachelor’s thesis, Inara Verzemnieks’ memoir *Among the Living and the Dead: A Tale of Exile and Homecoming on the War Roads of Europe* (2017) was analysed. The book consists of 288 pages divided in 20 chapters. The book was written over a five-year period when Verzemnieks regularly travelled to the Gulbene region in Latvia to meet her late grandmother’s Livija’s sister Ausma and visit the farm where her grandmother grew up. The

text focuses on the life stories of the two sisters, who get separated during World War II and experience every kind of hardship inflicted on the people at the time – from forced emigration, life in a refugee camp and eventual resettlement in the USA to deportation to Siberia, famine and hard labour, and eventual return home to Latvia.

#### 4.2.3. Procedure

To carry out the macroanalysis, the text of the memoir was divided by sentences and arranged into tables chapter by chapter (see Appendix 1). Sentences were designated to represent the lowest level items of analysis or micropropositions. To each microproposition, macrorules, DELETION (DEL), GENERALIZATION (GEN), and CONSTRUCTION (CON), were applied yielding higher level macropropositions (see Appendix 2). Next, the yielded macropropositions were grouped according to common themes and analysed revealing the image of Latvia they construct. Macroanalysis was carried out and macrorules were applied the following way.

*Table 4.1 Sentence level macroanalysis of Chapter IV (excerpt)*

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
(a) The woman who could be my grandmother, but is not, motions for me to follow her into the weary house.	CON	(1) Ausma invites Inara into her house.
(b) I can hear the chirruping of a bad hip as she hitches slowly down the narrow hallway, which is lined with tomato starts and baskets of flower bulbs, white with bonemeal, knobbly with dirt and age.	DEL	
(c) As she leads me into what appears to be a sitting room, I see her draw a balled-up handkerchief from the cuff of her cardigan and dab it at her eyes – eyes that I must keep convincing myself are not, in fact, my grandmother’s eyes.	CON	(2) Ausma is emotional upon meeting Inara. (3) Inara finds Ausma similar to Livija.
(d) My grandmother Livija’s eyes were brown, edged in blue, I remind myself.	DEL	
(e) This woman’s are blue, edged in brown.	DEL	
(f) She scrapes a chair back from the table, indicates I should sit.	DEL	
(g) It’s easier for her to let photographs speak.	CON	(4) Ausma shows Inara a family photo album.
(h) Here, she says, wresting a thick album from a cabinet in the corner of the room.	DEL	
(i) She sets it on the table between us, lifts away the yellowing layers of parchment that cover each face like a caul.	DEL	
(j) <i>Livija</i> , she says.	DEL	
(k) And my grandmother appears to us, a young woman, the hem of her skirt hovering above the summer-stiffened grass, her face turned slightly as if she registered the sound of her name.	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
(l) Next to her, a boy buttoned into a suit as rigid and unyielding as the fence posts in front of which they pose, itching neck and rakish grin stifled— <i>Janis!</i> —said just like that, an exclamation, the sound of uncontained braying, my grandmother’s brother.	DEL	
(m) So this must be you? I ask, pointing to a little girl who sits on a chair between the other two in the photograph.	DEL	
(n) Her hair is pulled into braids, her feet end in stiff boots.	DEL	
(o) She looks like she has been swinging them back and forth.	DEL	
(p) She nods.	DEL	
(q) <i>Ausma.</i>	DEL	
(r) It means dawn or daybreak in Latvian.	DEL	
(s) A lightening.	DEL	
(t) My grandmother’s sister, born when my grandmother, Livija, was fourteen, and whom I have specifically travelled here to meet, my <i>history in flesh and blood.</i>	CON, GEN	(5) Ausma is Inara’s grandmother’s younger sister. (6) Inara has travelled to Latvia to meet Ausma.
(u) Was this portrait taken at the farm? I ask Ausma	CON	(7) Inara tries to initiate a conversation about the farm Ausma grew up in.
(v) Yes, she says.	DEL	
(w) My grandmother told me all about the farm, I say.	DEL	
(x) Ausma doesn’t immediately respond.	DEL	
(y) It sounded like an incredible place, I say.	DEL	
(z) She flips a page.	DEL	
(aa) I can hear a clock somewhere in the house, its second hand conducting the tiny eternity that has opened up between us	CON	(8) Inara feels that Ausma does not want to talk about the farm.
(ab) You should know that your grandmother’s stories aren’t my stories, Ausma says at last.	GEN	(9) Ausma declares that she has different memories of life in the farm than Livija.
(ac) Her memories aren’t my memories.	DEL	

Table 4.1 provided above demonstrates the application of macrorules to the selected material. Sentence (a), the introductory sentence of the paragraph and the chapter, through CONSTRUCTION, is reduced into macroproposition (1). Sentence (c) yields two macropropositions – (2) and (3). Sentences (d) and (e) illustrate the thought process of the author, pertinent to (3), but are overall irrelevant and thus are deleted. Sentence (g), applying CONSTRUCTION, introduces macroproposition (4) which is supported by the sentences (h) through (p), which, in turn, are deleted. Sentence (t) yields macropropositions (5) and (6) which reveal the relation between Ausma and Livija and the reason for Inara’s visit to Latvia. Sentences (u) through (aa), applying DELETION and CONSTRUCTION, are reduced to the macropropositions (7) and (8). The two final sentences of the excerpt, by applying

GENERALIZATION and DELETION, yield macroproposition (9). Thus, the excerpt analysed in Table 4.1 has yielded nine macropropositions which need to be further reduced. Since being emotional (2), looking through a family photo album (4), and having a conversation about the family (7), (8), (9) can be considered normal components of meeting a family member, the macropropositions determined in the table above can, through the application of CONSTRUCTION, be reduced to the following macroproposition – Inara visits her grandmother’s younger sister Ausma in Latvia. In the further analysis of the chapter, the yielded macroproposition was absorbed by another in the creation of macrostructure M18 – Inara meets her extended family for the first time, headed by Ausma, Livija’s younger sister, and her husband Harijs, and instantly feels at home.

For the keyword analysis, first, in the text of the memoir, 100 most frequently occurring words (see Appendix 3) that are longer than 3 letters – to automatically exclude articles – were identified using the computer software NVivo (Online 1). Next, the list was qualitatively filtered leaving 44 nouns, which were grouped according to common themes. The concordances of the nouns in the filtered list were searched in the same software to determine premodifiers. The list of keywords was further reduced to 14 keywords that were found to have the most varied premodifiers. Then, semantic macrostructures were yielded from the identified keywords and premodifiers. Finally, the image of Latvia present in the yielded macrostructures was discussed.

In the next subchapters, the results of macroanalysis and keyword analysis are presented and discussed.

### **4.3. Results of macroanalysis and discussion**

The macroanalysis of the book allowed to divide the material in 163 macrostructures (see Appendix 2), some of which are only locally relevant, for example, M40 – After her family was put in the cattle car, Ausma was left alone. However, most of the macrostructures are globally relevant and work in the creation of the image of Latvia the author has expressed. The macrostructures are grouped and analysed according to the common theme and the constructed image is determined in terms of the theme with the overall image of Latvia revealed at the end of the discussion of the findings.

### 4.3.1. The Latvian people

M15 – Both Inara’s father and his father, Inara’s grandfather, Emils, fought in wars and developed mental health issues.

M98 – Emils miraculously survived being shot in the eye.

M93 – The last thing Emils saw with both his own eyes was war.

M103 – Livija, her two young children and her friend Liene fled Riga to escape the danger and violence of the war and ended up in a refugee camp in Hamburg, Germany.

M30 – Ausma with her parents and siblings had been exiled to Siberia.

The book mostly deals with stories about people – Verzemnieks’ (referred to in the analysis as Inara) parents, grandparents, her great-aunt with her husband. As evident in the macrostructures above, Verzemnieks family suffered through almost all of the terrors that took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Latvia and the sufferings undoubtedly hurt them mentally and physically. The author vividly describes in multiple episodes how as a child she tried to calm down her grandfather when his memories trapped him and he was taken back to his days at war (Verzemnieks, 2017: 12), how she barely had a relationship with her father when she was a child due to his inability to deal with his own mental scars (ibid.: 14). Verzemnieks’ grandfather was shot in the face in his last battle, but the bullet miraculously went past his brain and he only lost his eye (M98, M93). However, the horror of the situation stayed with him forever. Macrostructure M103 shows the situation Verzemnieks’ grandmother was in during the war, being forced to flee her home and head into the unknown, leaving everything behind. Macrostructure M30 reveals that Verzemnieks’ great-aunt Ausma with her family had been exiled and spent years in the harsh and unyielding landscape of Siberia.

M11 – Inara grew up with her grandparents and was very close with Livija.

M12 – Livija told many stories of her life in Latvia, recreating the farm *Lembi* in her own and Inara’s mind, with a great focus on the daily jobs on the farm.

M103 – Livija, her two young children and her friend Liene fled Riga to escape the danger and violence of the war and ended up in a refugee camp in Hamburg, Germany.

M142 – Ausma was the only provider for her family while in Siberia.

M140 – The labour was extremely hard in the harsh weather conditions and the workers, mostly women, worked ten hour shifts for weeks on end.

The macrostructures also reveal that the everyday life and survival in times of crisis often relied on the strength and mutual support of the women. In macrostructures M11 and M12 the close bond between Verzemnieks and her grandmother is shown. Macrostructure M103 explains how it was up to two women, Livija and Liene, to be courageous enough to go into the unknown and flee the war-torn city with two young children. Macrostructures M142 and M140 reveal that in Siberia it was Ausma who worked the most to ensure that the family survives.

M25 – Inara’s father’s traumatic past made him closed-off.

M115 – During Inara’s third visit, Ausma is more distant and barely talks to her.

M39 – People did not and do not talk about the terrors of the war and the repressions.

M95 – Emils had severe emotional traumas from the war and never spoke of it.

M89 – Those who were left behind, could only quietly observe the changes.

The image the author portrays of her grandparents and her great-aunt Ausma is that of pain overcome in silence. Macrostructures M25, M115, M39, and M95 all offer the same idea – pain is not talked about. The people around Verzemnieks are quiet, resigned and would rather not say anything at all than risk remembering or mentioning something that could hurt them once more. In the same way, as macrostructure M89 suggests, those who were spared exile did not dare ask what happened and why, they found safety in silence.

M64 – Despite their lack of freedom and harsh life, Latvians learned to be content with their lives.

M126 – Emils and Livija welcomed two more children while in the camp.

M73 – Inara’s grandparents had a quiet, but loving relationship.

M44 – Ausma and Harijs have a loving relationship.

Macrostructure M64 refers to the time period of Verzemnieks’ family’s ancestors who lived as serfs in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the statement can be applied to the family in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well, as the macrostructures M126, M73, and M44 show: having gone through all the hardships, Verzemnieks’ grandparents and great-aunt and uncle lived on, had children, loved each other and their children, and attempted to re-build their lives to live again as good as they could. Thus, the image of Latvia constructed from this cluster of macrostructures is that of resilience and determination of the people and especially the women.

### 4.3.2. Country living and the relationship with nature

M43 – In the countryside, the flow of time is marked according to nature.

M46 – Life in the countryside is structured and follows a routine.

M90 – Young Ausma found that living in a mindless routine was the only way to survive in the face of the uncertainty and fear about the future.

M14 – In Livija's and Ausma's childhood, children started working in the farm as soon as they started walking.

M63 – For a long time Latvians were peasants and serfs, believed to only know how to work on a farm, but the barons relied on their pagan knowledge of the natural world.

The cluster of macrostructures above reveals the deep connection Latvians have with nature and the way the people rely on nature. Macrostructure M43 states that the flow of time is marked according to nature and macrostructure M46 adds – life in the countryside is structured and organised. The day begins at daybreak and the day's work ends at dawn, the people eat what has grown and enjoy the view of the garden with the flowers that are blooming at the time, to be changed by the ones blooming later. Macrostructure M90 emphasises the importance of the daily routine when, after the start of World War II when Ausma was the only one working at the farm, the routine was all she could rely on. Macrostructure M14 reveals that on the farm there is work for everyone – even the smallest children have their duties and responsibilities.

Macrostructure M63 expresses that the Latvian ability to recognise the patterns in nature was heavily relied on by the barons who owned the land that the Latvians worked and lived on in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was what allowed the whole region to prosper.

M58 – When a farmhouse is abandoned, it is never demolished, it is left as it is.

M59 – Ausma and Inara visit *Lembi*, which is abandoned and in ruin, the property is overgrown.

M42 – Inara spent one summer experiencing life in the Latvian countryside, working in the garden and foraging in the forest.

M47 – Inara thinks that the most important parts of life are the everyday little happenings.

The respect the Latvians feel for nature is expressed in M58 – as a house gets abandoned, no one rushes in with bulldozers to tear it down, instead the past is allowed to remain in its place, and nature takes it over slowly, in its own pace. Having observed this calm and structured life,

Verzemnieks concluded as expressed in M47 – the known and the predictable, a routine, is what brings happiness to Latvians.

M76 – To express his silent love for her, Emils carved Livija's name in a tree behind his school.

M135 – Upon her next visit to Latvia, Inara spent time with her cousin who was hesitant to leave the countryside after having graduated university, because she was too attached to the nature.

M100 – Inara, like her grandmother did, feels that Latvia's sky is more special than elsewhere.

M119 – Latvians made the acronym DP to mean Dieva Putnini – God's little birds – always in motion.

M104 – Latvian folk stories are full of nature bearing the role of surrogate because children lost their parents so often due to crises.

The episode in the book that is reduced to the macrostructure M76 reveals the feeling of security the nature evokes – full of love for Livija, but unable to express it, Emils turned to the trees behind the school as a place where anything would be accepted, and entrusted the forest with his feelings by carving his beloved's name. The same sense of security within and reliance on nature is felt by Verzemnieks' cousin, as evident in M135, who even having obtained higher education in the city, was hesitant to leave the fields, the animals, and the forest she has grown up with. The same sense of longing for and belonging to the life under the Latvian sky is felt by Verzemnieks and her grandmother, evident in M100, as they both feel that the sky in Latvia is more special than anywhere else.

While in the refugee camp, the people were referred to as DPs. Knowing that nature is their solace, the Latvians created a different meaning to the acronym, calling themselves little birds, turning the emotionless acronym into something meaningful for them – being one with nature (M119). Macrostructure M104 reveals a similar sentiment – in the folk stories, nature took care of children who had lost their parents. The emigrees of war can also be seen as children taken away from their mother – their country.

M41 – The countryside of Latvia has been almost completely abandoned due to people emigrating in search of better life.

The demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century modern living have changed what was once considered to be the source of happiness and the means of existence, and macrostructure M41 expresses that large numbers of people have emigrated from the countryside in search of prosperity and different type of happiness leaving the countryside almost empty.

To conclude, the second cluster of macrostructures reveals that the image of Latvia is that of deep belonging to and reliance on nature.

#### **4.3.3. Traditions and beliefs surrounding death**

M7 – Inara’s grandmother believed she was once visited by the ghost of her mother.

M2 – Latvians believe that the dead can return.

M6 – Latvians believe in life after death.

M3 – It is believed that once a year, the dead return to observe the living.

M4 – The living recognise the arrival of the dead and communicate with them.

M21 – In the old days, the dead remained members of the family.

M19 – In the old days, people used to sit around the newly dead person’s body and talk to it.

M20 – During the body’s first night after death, the living left food for it in case they wanted to have one last meal.

Perhaps the most important theme, the relationship underlying the whole memoir that is also included in the title of the memoir, is the relationship between the living and the dead. The first and the second chapter of the book detail the old traditions surrounding death.

Macrostructure M2 expresses the basics of the relationship – Latvians believe that the dead can return and thus that there is life after death (macrostructure M6). As mentioned in the previous subchapter, life in the countryside was organised according to recurring patterns and thus, Latvians believed, the dead follow the patterns, as well, and return once a year to meet their still living families. Not wishing to upset the dead and, as macrostructure M21 suggests, believing that after their deaths members of the family remain themselves, the living prepare for their arrival and make sure to welcome them. Moreover, in the old days right after a person had died, the family would converse with them (M19) and leave next to them for the night their one last meal (M20). This marks the significance of family among Latvians and explicitly defines the care the living have for the dead.

M9 – Livija and Emils had bought land plots for their own graves.

As macrostructure M9 suggests, Verzemnieks' grandparents Livija and Emils prepared their own final resting places during their lifetime. This is nothing out of the ordinary in the Latvian culture and shows the ease with which the people treat death – it is not something final and the person who dies is not gone from the lives of their loved ones, they simply move on to a different, better place and live on.

M5 – The dead are always linked to the place where they had lived.

M110 – Latvians believe in people having psychic powers.

M8 – Even when burying their dead outside of Latvia, the Latvian community took care that at least some handfuls of Latvian soil were with the dead.

M36 – People in Gulbene used to inscribe names and symbols in a pine tree near the cemetery as a tribute to the dead.

M37 – Even when no one inscribes on the tree anymore, everyone still honours the tree.

The dead are forever linked to their home, macrostructure M5 reveals, thus, only being able to return to their home or speaking to their families through dreams, or with someone living who can hear them, as in macrostructure M110 that tells that Latvians believe in the psychic abilities of some people.

In cases when due to resettlement it was impossible for the dead to be buried near their home, in the Latvian soil, Verzemnieks observed that handfuls of Latvian soil, smuggled in the USA by the emigrees, members of the local Latvian community, were scattered in the grave, giving the dead at least a part of their home (M8). In the old days in Gulbene, as macrostructure M36 suggests, to pay their respect to the dead, people made inscriptions in a tree near the cemetery, again turning to nature for solace and support, and nowadays when the people have stopped making inscriptions, they still honour and remember the tree for what it once meant (M37).

The cluster of macrostructures on the theme of the traditions surrounding death constructs the image of Latvia as the land of people very respectful towards their dead.

#### **4.3.4. Culture and folklore**

M128 – Latvians in the refugee camp learned English and showcased their skills, but also tried to preserve their culture by singing and dancing, and gardening.

M129 – A university was founded in the refugee camp, Emils was a highly regarded lecturer.

M16 – Livija and Emils were part of the local Latvian immigrant community.

M33 – Inara learned about Latvian traditions, folklore, and farm-living in Latvian summer camp.

The macrostructures provided above illustrate that Latvians who emigrated remembered and honoured their culture. In the refugee camp (M128) there was dancing and singing the Latvian traditional songs, and to keep their knowledge and to pass it on to others, a university was founded in the camp (M129). It is evident that Latvians always keep themselves busy and as expressed in subchapter 4.3.1. do not wallow in their misery, but instead fight on and try to make the best of even the worst situations. Verzemnieks' family was among many other Latvian families who resettled to the USA in the post-war period and, as macrostructure M16 suggests, the resettled families formed their own community, staying together and honouring their Latvian heritage. The families, then, tried to pass the knowledge on to their children and grandchildren who were born in the USA by organising summer camps where the children were taught about the Latvian culture and the skills necessary to live in the countryside as their ancestors did.

M69 – Andrejs Pumpurs poem Lacplēsis (The Bear Slayer) is part of Latvian national identity.

M70 – Lacplēsis is the hero, but in the final fight with the Black Knight, they both fall off a cliff.

M71 – The finale of the poem is an eternal struggle that reminds Inara of the strain she is putting on Ausma to go back into her painful memories.

M137 – In Latvian folklore, forest is a magical, powerful place.

In the book, Verzemnieks discovers not only her family's stories, but also the stories that have shaped the Latvian identity like Andrejs Pumpurs' poem Lacplēsis (The Bear Slayer). The hero whose mother is a bear is another homage to the deep connection to nature and proof of the belief found in macrostructure M137, that in the forest magic things can happen. In the finale of the poem, the hero saves people from the villain, the Black Knight, but the hero himself dies, too, thus, exemplifying the Latvian readiness to self-sacrifice to save their families, their people.

Thus, in terms of culture and folklore, the image of Latvia constructed in the book is that of strong cultural values that guide the lives of Latvians.

To conclude, macroanalysis of the memoir *Among the Living and the Dead* reveals the variety of ways of looking at a nation – through the characteristics of the people, the

relationship with nature, different traditions and beliefs. Summing the fragmentary images of Latvia, it can be stated that the image of Latvia constructed in the memoir *Among the Living and the Dead* is that of resilient and determined people who rely on nature and draw their strength from their cultural values which include a deep respect for the dead.

#### 4.4. Results of keyword analysis and discussion

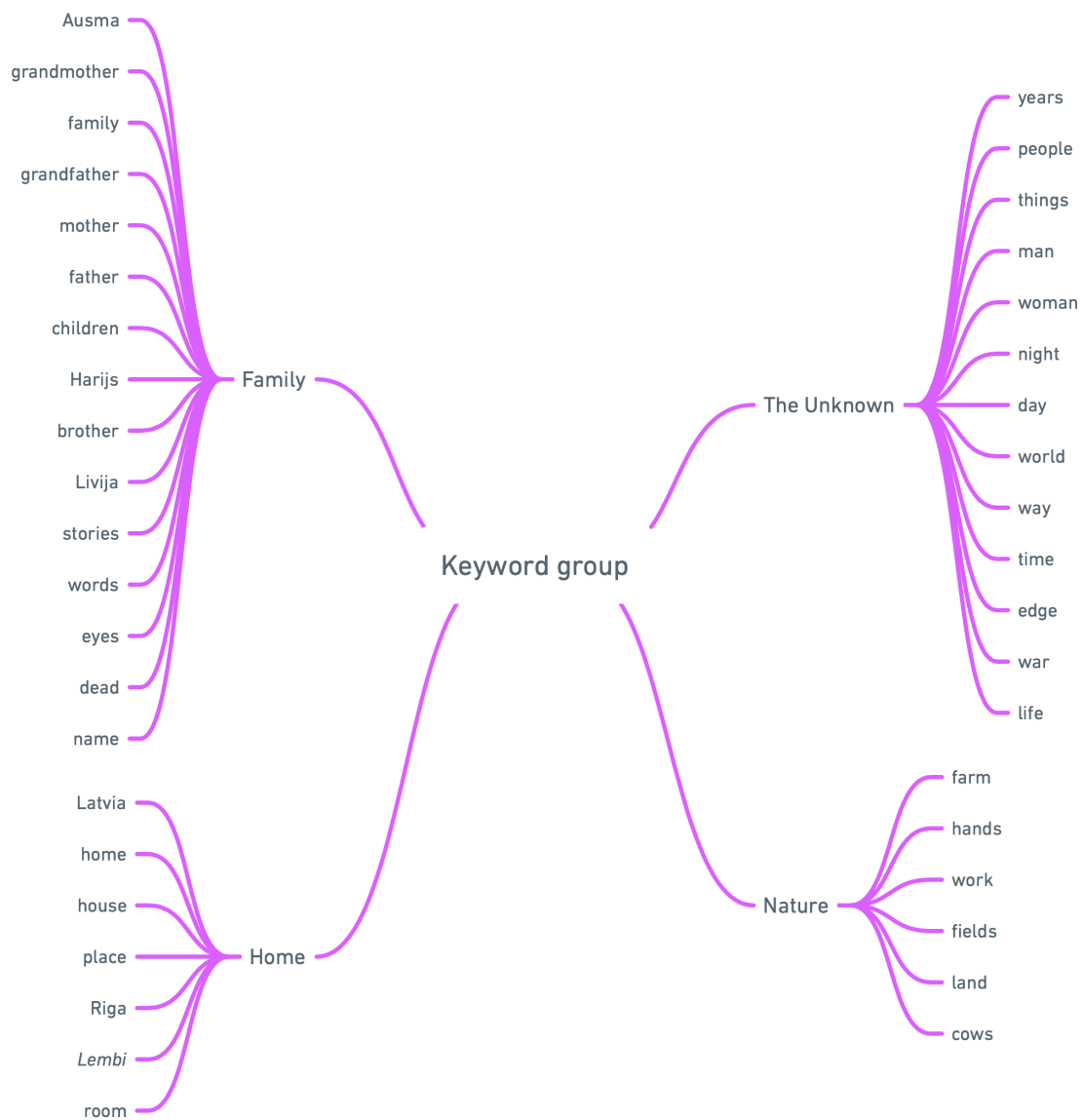
The keyword analysis of the selected material dealt with quantitative and qualitative filtering of the text. The preliminary results – the list of 100 keywords – can be found in Appendix 3, while the further process of determining keywords and premodifiers and their analysis is developed in the present subchapter. The selected keywords and premodifiers are discussed in terms of the macrostructures that can be yielded from the items and the yielded macrostructures are analysed to discover the image of Latvia constructed.

The list of 100 keywords was qualitatively filtered leaving out all words which did not qualify for analysis, that is, only nouns were selected and are presented in the Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Keywords – nouns

No.	Keyword	No.	Keyword	No.	Keyword
1	Ausma	15	children	29	woman
2	time	16	house	30	words
3	grandmother	17	life	31	night
4	way	18	place	32	work
5	years	19	Riga	33	world
6	day	20	people	34	edge
7	family	21	things	35	eyes
8	grandfather	22	farm	36	stories
9	Latvia	23	hands	37	brother
10	home	24	man	38	fields
11	dead	25	Harijs	39	land
12	mother	26	name	40	Livija
13	father	27	<i>Lembi</i>	41	cows
14	war	28	room		

The list of keywords contained 41 nouns, as presented above. Most of the nouns are common nouns, but six proper nouns were found to be key – names of places and people. The next stage of the analysis is the grouping of nouns according to the common theme, which in the less obvious cases is determined by the understanding of the memoir. The groups are presented in a mindmap in Figure 4.1. and can be found in table form in Appendix 4.



**Figure 4.1 Keyword groups**

As the Figure 4.1 illustrates, four themes were discerned among the noun keywords – Family, Home, The Unknown, and Nature. The groups Family and The Unknown are the largest groups and contain 15 and 13 words, while the groups Home and Nature – seven and six words. The themes represent the main ideas found in the memoir, and the number of words in each group may be an indicator to the dominance of the theme in the story. The grouping of the keywords is similar to the grouping of macrostructures present in the subchapter 4.3, which serves for the accuracy of the analysis.

The next stage of the analysis of the keywords was the concordance search which allowed to reduce the list of 44 noun keywords to 14 keywords with the most varied premodifiers. Appendix 5 contains the outcome of the concordance search with all unique premodifiers of the noun keywords. The results of the concordance search were considered by the author of the present thesis who picked 14 keywords and their premodifiers for analysis of

the image of Latvia. The keywords and premodifiers selected for the analysis, the discussion of the implied macrostructures and the image of Latvia constructed according to the implied macrostructures is presented further in the text.

*Table 4.3 Keywords selected for analysis*

No.	Keyword	Number of premodifiers	No.	Keyword	Number of premodifiers
1	stories	12	8	world	7
2	words	10	9	time	8
3	home	12	10	life	11
4	place	12	11	farm	7
5	room	10	12	hands	10
6	years	11	13	fields	14
7	things	20	14	cows	7

Table 4.3 presents the quantitatively and qualitatively filtered list of keywords in the memoir *Among the Living and the Dead*. The keywords represent all four of the groups in which the keywords were previously divided, emphasising the importance of all four themes in the book. The filtered list of keywords, however, highlights the representatives of the group that carry the most meaning in the story.

Keywords with the most varied premodifiers from the group Family are *stories* and *words*, which points to the importance of story-telling and communication among family members in the memoir. Considering the rather tragic events depicted in the memoir – exile to a barely inhabitable area in Siberia, forced emigration and resettlement to a faraway country – all which forced the family apart, it becomes evident that it was *stories* and *words* that could keep them together.

Keywords with the most varied premodifiers from the group Home are *home*, *place*, and *room*. These keywords show the characters' continuous search and need for a definite place to call their own. Again, considering all the different ways the characters were being removed from their homes and moved from one place to another for years on end only taking up temporary spaces, it is self-evident that the question of having a stable home is of utmost importance in the memoir.

The group The Unknown is the most represented in the selected list of keywords: *years*, *things*, *world*, *time*, *life*. Three out of five selected keywords – *years*, *time*, *life* – have to do with the passage of time, which in the context of the unknown and uncertainty about the world takes the centre stage. The characters in the memoir, the relatives of the author who were in the Displaced Persons camp and in Siberia, spent years not knowing how their life

would turn out and the only thing they could do was wait. The keyword *world* having various premodifiers emphasises the changing state of the world and confirms the belonging of the word with other keywords representing the unknown. The keyword *things* has the most varied premodifiers out of all keywords as Table 4.3 shows. The word by itself is quite indefinite and belongs in the group The Unknown, thus, its modification by a large number of premodifiers represents how great the uncertainty about the world was.

The remaining four keywords in the list represent the group Nature. Keywords *farm*, *hands*, *fields*, *cows* remind of the side in the life of the memoir's characters other than suffering – their connection to nature and the constituent parts of living in the country such as working on a farm. The fact that out of all farm animals exactly cows have made the keyword list shows the prevalence of the animals in the Latvian landscape and reminds of the lifeline that cows may provide in dire situations – producing milk which can be used to make various other foodstuff.

The filtered list of keywords reveals the most significant parts of the story. Keywords representing family, home, the unknown, and nature and the discussion of the keywords developed above allows to yield the macrostructure KM1 – The story in the memoir deals with people removed from safety and security who are then looking for a way back to it, often relying on the natural world.

As mentioned above, the selected keywords have various premodifiers. The premodifiers provide additional details of the events happening in the story and the characters' evaluation of the events. Table 4.4 presents the premodifiers of the selected keywords.

**Table 4.4 Premodifiers of keywords selected for analysis, grouped**

No.	Group	Premodifiers
1	Classifier	War, bear, DP, written, German, funeral, former, nursing, future, country, appointed, assigned, sitting, dining, consecutive, recent, later, earliest, Communist, passing, remaining, existing, given, adult, collective, chicken, poultry, family, surrounding, shorn, overwintered, hemp, vegetable, rutted, rye, barley, caraway, cabbage, milk, Siberian
2	Neutral evaluation	Different, long, same, regular, next, physical, very, specific, white-walled, paneled, visible, small, little, massive, lumbering, solemn, ponderous, other, every-day, nearby, big, secret
3	Positive epithet	Choice, resurrection, family, right, perceptive, picturesque, childhood, true, new, incredible, easy, happiest, comfortable, only, original, living, sacred, simple, known, eternal, real, enough, sweet, whole, recreated, reclaimed, green, heavily uttered, voluptuous

No.	Group	Premodifiers
4	Negative epithet	Old, rambling, startling, labored, mumbling, last, darkened, broken, nearly empty, scoured, hunger, frantic, lost, chaotic, saddest, forgotten, unspoken, rotting, harmful, strange, unthinking, rotted, turgid, hard, peasant, half, insistent, empty, invisible, chapped, rough, reluctant, callused, riven, blistered, dead, spindly, sick

In Table 4.4 the premodifiers of the selected keywords were divided in groups based on the premodifiers' inherent properties. About a half of the premodifiers were deemed to be classifiers (*sitting, dining, adult, chicken*) or words providing neutral evaluation (*white-walled, every-day, regular*). The other half of the premodifiers were deemed to be either positive or negative epithets, thus, carrying inherently positive or negative quality.

The classifier group of premodifiers reveals the connection the story has to history – words such as *war, DP, German, Communist, collective, Siberian* are related to the tragic events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century discussed in the memoir. The variety of words related to the natural world demonstrates the immense presence of nature, flora and fauna, in the story.

The words bearing neutral evaluation do not reveal much about the story per se, but it can be observed that things and events in the story are evaluated by their appearance, size, regularity, and relative location.

Three of the positive epithets begin in *re-* describing the process of *resurrection*, and things that are *recreated* and *reclaimed* – actions that show strength and perseverance after loss and suffering. Words such as *living, sacred, eternal, real, whole* refer to the relationship between the physical and the spiritual world and *green, voluptuous, and heavily uddered* continue the theme of prosperity of nature being closely woven with the prosperity of the people.

The negative epithets describe qualities of demolished, abandoned spaces (*darkened, broken, scoured, forgotten, empty, rotting, old*), the despair of people (*rambling, frantic, hunger, chaotic, reluctant*) and the physical traumas and weakness of the living (*chapped, rough, callused, blistered, sick, dead*), thus describing the terror that infiltrated all spheres of life.

The premodifiers of the selected keywords describe the qualities and evaluations of the events happening in the story. The classifying and neutral premodifiers point to the historical background of the events. The positive epithets demonstrate the signs of strength in the people in the aftermath of the history while the negative epithets demonstrate the negative effects of the harsh history as it happened. The discussion of the premodifiers yields macrostructure KM2 – Harsh history created emotional and physical traumas that the people

were able to overcome by the refusal to lose anything forever and relying on the spiritual world and nature.

After the selected keywords and premodifiers have been analysed separately they may be merged to explore the context the keywords appear in, yielding additional macrostructures that in conclusion allow to determine the image of Latvia constructed in the memoir.

*Table 4.5 The selected keywords and their premodifiers*

<b>Premodifiers</b>	<b>Keyword</b>
Old, war, different, long, rambling, choice, resurrection, family, same, bear, startling, DP	stories
Right, labored, perceptive, picturesque, written, German, regular, old, mumbling, next	words
Childhood, last, old, physical, true, new, funeral, former, nursing, future, country, only	home
Regular, incredible, appointed, easy, happiest, different, very, comfortable, assigned, original, new, specific	place
Sitting, little, dining, white-walled, darkened, broken, paneled, nearly empty, small, scoured	room
Consecutive, recent, earliest, hunger, frantic, later, lost, chaotic, war, Communist, passing	years
Remaining, the saddest, forgotten, unspoken, lost, living, sacred, rotting, harmful, visible, small, strange, simple, unthinking, massive, lumbering, rotted, solemn, turgid, ponderous	things
Known, other, every-day, existing, living, new, physical	world
Lost, long, hard, last, given, eternal, real, enough	time
New, old, real, sweet, simple, former, peasant, adult, whole, every-day, half-	life
Collective, re-created, old, chicken, poultry, family, nearby	farm
Insistent, empty, big, invisible, chapped, rough, little, reluctant, callused, riven	hands
Surrounding, shorn, overwintered, hemp, vegetable, rutted, blistered, rye, barley, reclaimed, secret, caraway, green, cabbage	fields
Heavily uddered, dead, voluptuous, milk, spindly, Siberian, sick	cows

Table 4.5 presents the merged list of keywords and premodifiers. In the discussion that follows, the keywords and their premodifiers are analysed according to the division of keywords in the thematic groups Family, Home, The Unknown, and Nature introduced on page No. 38 of the present thesis.

The selected keywords representing the group Family – *stories* and *words* – are premodified by adjectives and nouns describing the communication between family members as history is shared between them. Keywords with noun premodifiers – *war stories*, *family stories*, *DP stories*, *resurrection stories*, *German words* – determine what was told and, in a sense, express the very fabric of the memoir, as it is a family story about war and resurrection. The adjectives premodifying the keywords reveal how the stories were told – *rambling stories*, *startling stories*, *laboured words*, *mumbling words*, *written words* – first of all, in

writing and in real life and, second of all, nervously and with heartache, thus illustrating the difficulty of remembering the past.

The Home group of words and their premodifiers show the changes that took place in the living situations of the characters – there is the *former home*, *old home* and *new home*, signifying a change. The mention of a *true home* implies the existence of some not-true, perhaps less-close-to-the-heart home, in the same way *physical home* implies the existence of a spiritual home, as well. Adjectives *appointed* and *assigned* modifying the word *place* imply a lack of control over the situation, as was the case when the family arrived to the refugee camp or Siberia. Premodifiers *darkened*, *broken*, *nearly empty*, *small*, *scoured* of the word *room* describe the broken state of homes that were vandalised and then abandoned during and after the war or the dilapidated buildings people tried to inhabit in Siberia.

The group of words and premodifiers on The Unknown reveals the true extent of the uncertainty and suffering that the characters went through. Adjectives and nouns *hunger*, *frantic*, *lost*, *chaotic*, *war* describing *years* point to the extended horrors, to tragedy that is continual and thus the more painful. The implications of *long* and *lost time* support the previous statement and the combinations *known world*, *new world* and *new life*, *old life*, *former life*, *half-life* further prove the idea of fundamental changes impossible to be undone. The many different premodifiers of the keyword *things* show the characters' rather negative overall evaluation of their surroundings which may stem from the fact that most of the time people were in those surroundings not of their own will but due to unfortunate circumstances. Premodifiers show that *things* in the characters' lives were *the saddest*, *forgotten*, *unspoken*, *lost*, *harmful*, *strange*, *unthinking*, but life had its good parts as well as some *things* remained *living*, *sacred*, and *simple*.

The fourth group, that of keywords pertaining to Nature, more precisely shows the diversity of the natural life, as well as the influence of politics on the life in the country. Premodifiers *chicken*, *poultry* of *farm* specify some types of farms in the memoir and the many different types of fields – *vegetable*, *rye*, *barley*, *caraway*, *cabbage* – emphasise the variety of foodstuff people in the countryside grow to provide for themselves. Cows being a keyword in the memoir and being described as either *voluptuous*, *heavily uddered*, thus healthy and providing, or *sick*, *spindly*, thus unable to provide, show the care people had for them and how the cows could help people survive. The premodifier *collective* before the word *farm* introduces the new classification of farms as a consequence of World War II and the subsequent occupation of Latvia. Finally, the premodifiers of *hands*, the most reliable and sometimes only instruments, reveal the toll of the hard work. People's hands were *chapped*, *rough*, *callused*, *riven* as people worked extremely hard to ensure their own survival.

The merged list of keywords and their premodifiers reveals, in short, the main points of the memoir and the discussion developed above allows to foreground macrostructure KM3 – The memoir is a family story about irreversible change in the face of which people were able to rely only on the work of their own hands and their animals to survive.

The keyword analysis of the memoir *Among the Living and the Dead* has yielded three macrostructures:

KM1 – The story in the memoir deals with people removed from safety and security who are then looking for a way back to it, often relying on the natural world;

KM2 – Harsh history created emotional and physical traumas that people were able to overcome by the refusal to lose anything forever and relying on the spiritual world and nature;

KM3 – The memoir is a family story about irreversible change in the face of which people were able to rely only on the work of their own hands and their animals to survive.

All three of the macrostructures taken together construct an image of Latvia present in the memoir. The constructed image of Latvia is that of emotionally and physically strong people who have overcome incredible hardships relying only on themselves and nature.

## Conclusions

Latvian-American author Inara Verzemnieks' memoir *Among the Living and the Dead: A Tale of Exile and Homecoming on the War Roads of Europe* (2017) is the story of Verzemnieks' Latvian relatives, focusing on the lives of her grandmother and great-aunt, that reveals the life-changing events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the sisters went through and where they led them. The goal of the present Bachelor's thesis was to determine semantic macrostructures that construct the image of Latvia in Inara Verzemnieks' memoir *Among the Living and the Dead*. The research question sought an answer as to how the identified semantic macrostructures contribute to the generalised image of homeland established in the memoir genre.

The analysis of the theoretical material on memoirs showed that memoir is a genre of life-writing that deals with personal memories of the author. For the writers, the process of writing a memoir sometimes is a means to achieve closure with loved ones who have passed away or look for answers to unanswered questions. The theoretical findings suggest that memoir writing is a means of homecoming, which may be not only emotional, but physical, as well, when for research purposes the writers may travel to the places they write about.

Research on the development of country image revealed that country images are formed by societies of expats abroad. In the creation of country images, the economic and political situation is one of the most important factors. For emigrants, country images are subjective and based on personal circumstances – reasons for departure, the experience of living in the new host country and the native one, friends and family in the new host country or friends and family that remain in the native one.

The theoretical findings on the concept of macrostructures showed that macrostructures are organisational tools that help store and retrieve information in one's mind and through reduction, organisation, and construction of information reveal the main idea of a discourse. Macrostructures are formed from micropropositions through the application of macrorules. However, the analysis of macrostructures is very contextual and somewhat subjective, as it relies on the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the world.

The empirical research was carried out employing two methods – macroanalysis and keyword analysis. During macroanalysis, the text of the memoir was divided in micropropositions and macrorules were applied, yielding macrostructures. During keyword analysis, keywords with the most varied premodifiers, the premodifiers themselves and the merged list of both was analysed. The application of both methods yielded separate, but nevertheless very similar results and determined the image of Latvia as that of resilient and

determined people who have overcome incredible hardships by relying on themselves and nature, drawing strength from their cultural values that include deep respect for the dead.

The identified semantic macrostructures focus on the experiences of the author's family members; thus, the image of the homeland is based on these experiences. However, regardless of the negative experiences associated with Latvia, the image is a positive one, highlighting the reconciling power of memory. Hence, to answer the research question, it might be deduced, that the constructed image is similar to the image of the homeland generally appearing in memoirs – it idealises the homeland and its people. However, the image also takes note of the suffering that the homeland brought – decay of home, betrayal of peers.

The results in a broader context reveal the continued presence of the terrors of World War II in the lives of Latvian people – they are still viewed in the light of those events and the image of Latvia is subsequently created in relation to the outcomes of those events.

The strength of the research lies in the triangulation of two research methods to minimise the subjectivity factor, however the analysis of a single book cannot yield generalisable results.

## Theses

- 1) Memoir is a genre of life-writing that provides closure and serves as a means of homecoming for the writer.
- 2) Country image is the attitude people develop evaluating a country from afar.
- 3) Emigrants' image of their native country is formed according to the individual combination of such factors as the proximity to friends and family, the reason for emigration, and the evaluation of the country's economic and political situation.
- 4) Macrostructures are the result of the reduction, organisation, and construction of information, revealing the main idea of a discourse.
- 5) Macrostructures are yielded through the application of four macrorules: DELETION, GENERALIZATION, CONSTRUCTION, ZERO RULE.
- 6) The analysis of macrostructures is very contextual and relies on the researcher's knowledge of the world.
- 7) Macroanalysis of *Among the Living and the Dead* determined the image of Latvia to be that of resilient and determined people who rely on nature and draw their strength from their cultural values which include a deep respect for the dead.
- 8) The keywords of *Among the Living and the Dead* highlighted four themes present in the memoir: Family, Home, The Unknown, Nature.
- 9) Keyword analysis of *Among the Living and the Dead* determined the image of Latvia to be that of emotionally and physically strong people who have overcome incredible hardships relying only on themselves and nature.
- 10) The synthesised image of Latvia in *Among the Living and the Dead* is that of resilient and determined people who have overcome incredible hardships by relying on themselves and nature, drawing strength from their cultural values that include deep respect for the dead.
- 11) The identified semantic macrostructures reveal that the image of the homeland, regardless of the negative experiences associated with Latvia, is a positive one, and that the image idealises the homeland and its people while acknowledging the suffering associated with it.

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## Appendix 1: First-Level Macroanalysis

### CHAPTER 1

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The road I must travel to reach my grandmother's lost village is like tracing the progression of an equation designed to restore lost time	CON	Inara drives through Latvia and feels she is travelling to the past.
Each kilometer that carries me from Riga seems to subtract five years	DEL	
First there are the gas stations and Swedish supermarket chains, signs ever burning	DEL	
Next come the old Soviet-era apartment buildings, stubborn blocks of concrete and pebble-dash, their facades brittle and peeling like the skin of old wasps' nests	DEL	
Down in the parking lots, old women pile bones for the stray cats	DEL	
From this point, the land begins its reclaiming, grass and Queen Anne's lace rooting through abandoned concrete slabs	DEL	
Occasionally, a house will appear, canted and suffering, maybe with a slope-shouldered figure poking at a smoldering brush pile in the yard	DEL	
But just as quickly, these glimpses are smothered by the trees	DEL	
Sometimes a house stands still long enough to admit that it is abandoned, portions of the roof skinned away to reveal blackberries growing on the inside, the surrounding fields neck-high and riotous	DEL	
Soon the village center announces itself: first come the thumps of the railroad tracks and then the houses, clad in wood worn as gray as lichen	DEL	
Sheets snap on clotheslines	DEL	
A van parked in a gravel turnout advertises smoked carp	DEL	
A man teeters along the shoulder on a child's bicycle, a bottle wrapped in brown paper poking its neck from his jacket pocket	DEL	
The center holds for a few more seconds and then abruptly, it gives up and lets the fields resume their patter: rapeseed, rye, rapeseed, rye	DEL	
Eventually, the fields stop just long enough to take a breath, revealing a long, rutted driveway	DEL	
At the end sits a home made from brick, modern by the standards of the countryside, clearly built within the last sixty years, after the Second World War, though the sun and the snow and the rain have worried it to the point of exhaustion	DEL	
The yard is still, except for three chickens, muttering and picking their way across tindered grass	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The house acts as if it is empty, though I know someone is inside, waiting for me	CON	The destination of Inara's route is a house in the countryside.
I sit for a moment, listening to the car's cooling engine, the chickens clapping their beaks, skimming the air for insects I can't see	DEL	
And just as I am trying to think of what I want to say—how to introduce myself to someone I have always and never known—the door to the little house opens, and I see my grandmother	DEL	
Of course, by this time, my grandmother, the woman who raised me, has been dead for more than five years	CON	Inara's grandmother is dead.

## CHAPTER 2

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
This is why I had journeyed to my grandmother's lost village, nestled at the edge of Latvia, which is itself nestled at the edge of Europe's psychic north, south, east and west, or, as Pope Innocent III described it in a papal bull written in the thirteenth century, <i>the edge of the knownworld</i>	GEN	Meeting Ausma is the reason Inara travelled deep into Latvia, deep into Europe.
Because I imagined, maybe, I might find her again in the old stories that still existed there	CON	Inara misses her grandmother.
Maybe what I mean to say is that I hoped to see, as the writer Rebecca West has put it, <i>what history meant in flesh and blood</i>	DEL	
And I suppose you could say this same recycled hope is what then moved me to return year after year, for what would ultimately become five consecutive years—until I could almost convince myself that I knew what it was like to live there, at the edge of the known world, as if I were an old story, too—at least for as long as the handful of weeks or months I managed to string together with each trip	GEN	Inara returned to Latvia for five years in a row.
People say, <i>If the old stories are to be trusted</i> , when in fact the old stories never stopped being trusted, because trust is different than belief	DEL	
Belief is to faith, to truth, as trust is to comfort, to consolation	DEL	
Whether a matter of comfort, or of consolation, it's long been assumed of this region, where my grandmother was born, and where she made her life until the outbreak of the Second World War, that at some point each year the dead will come home	GEN	Latvians believe that the dead can return.
And while general consensus holds that the dead's arrival can be read in the last stalks of grain, as they lengthen with the shadows, a signal that the fields are ready for the final pass of the scythe, no one can say which route the dead take on their annual pilgrimage, whether they walk alone or in procession	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Now that I know my grandmother's lost village as well as I do, I like to imagine them cutting through its streets, lingering at the windows of the beauty salon where the last of the summer brides are having their hair set, slipping just past the reach of the angry goat tethered in the field adjacent to the crumbling apartment blocks	DEL	
It's possible, of course, that the dead prefer to make their way through the forests, where they can wander the nettle-hemmed paths looking for the last of the mushrooms, blackening now, the soft, gilled undersides thick with worms	DEL	
Perhaps some of them recall where the woods hide the old Soviet missile base, birch trees growing from the roofs of the abandoned living quarters, piles of sodden clothing strewn at the entrances to the former command center, the deep furrows in the earth that mark the old beds of the nuclear warheads	DEL	
Should the dead choose to go through the fields, and it's evening, they can always fall in behind the line of heavily uddered cows, nipples shuddering and arcing milk with each thudden step	DEL	
<i>Majamajamaja</i> , the herders sing and clap the air at their backs: <i>Homehomehome</i>	DEL	
Whether it is their childhood home or the last home that the dead inhabited that they choose to visit during this time, no one really knows	DEL	
But it's long been understood that once a year it is possible for the dead to suspend their exile from our world and cross back over to see how life has continued in their absence	GEN	Once a year, the dead return to observe the living.
At one time, this idea would have been a source of great consolation to both the living and the dead, the possibility of return, however brief: to shoulder open the front door and find the row of boots, mud- and manure-cruste, still next to the far wall; one of the barn cats, broken-whiskered and notch-eared, secret sprayers of the phlox and host beds, trying to slink in behind them; and everyone around the table, stabbing cabbage around their plates, slathering black bread with butter	DEL	
With each visit the dead would watch the lives of the not-dead progress: the new, fumbling couples, whispering and biting at down pillows; the blinking infants, swaddled and mewling; the graying heads, rasping and hacking into the closing dark	DEL	
And while the living wouldn't have seen the dead during this time, they understood that the dead were close, watching	CON	The living recognize the arrival of the dead and communicate with them.
They might have called out their names, talked to them, told them what they had missed over the past year, even set them a regular place at the table to encourage their company	DEL	
But eventually, the living would decide that the visit had gone on long enough	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Maybe they worried the dead were getting too comfortable, and might never want to leave	DEL	
So they would politely inform the dead that it was time for them to go back to their world and wait until the next turn of autumn	DEL	
They fell into an easy rhythm, the living and the dead, anticipating this annual reunion	DEL	
And that was the first mistake: assuming that this was how things would be for eternity	DEL	
Because let's say suddenly, one year, the dead pushed open the door to their old home and found everyone gone	CON	The living do not always stay in the same place.
Only empty rooms and overturned chairs and scattered papers, and a pile of white fur and bones in the old root cellar	DEL	
It's hard to imagine the dead who found this would have wanted to linger for long, but because it was so new to them, this emptiness, maybe the dead liked having their old home to themselves at first, liked the way it allowed them to remember, unchallenged, the way things were in their time	DEL	
But how many times can you unhasp all the safety pins in the sewing basket or place your palms on the surface of every mirror before you long for the presence of someone else to remind you that you were there, even in death	DEL	
So, when the dead returned again the next year and suddenly saw smoke clawing its way from the chimney, it's possible they felt something rising in them, too, something like hope	DEL	
But once they crossed the threshold, they would see how everything was wrong: hay on the floors, ankle deep; the air thick with the smell of ammonia and dung; lowing from every room; scraping hooves; dozens of wet eyes meeting theirs in the dark; tails thumping against the walls of rooms turned stalls	DEL	
Even if it so happened that people eventually reclaimed the home of the dead from the cows, these newcomers would be no one the dead knew, or anyone who knew the dead—strangers speaking a strange language, living behind worn blankets that had been hung from the ceiling, crude dividers simulating some semblance of personal space, but that could not block out the sounds of the night, the groaning, the stiff shuffling to the back of the house, once a bedroom, now a makeshift privy, a hole hacked in the floor over which everyone squatted	CON	The dead upon their return do not meet their living, they find strangers.
This is where, according to the logic of the living, it would have made sense to turn away, to retreat, maybe to the barn, empty except for the tractor that identified this as a collective farm, Russian-made, narrow-snouted, like the dogs that once slunk through here, long ago, secretly rooting through the stalls	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
But what do we, the living, know of how the dead define their losses	DEL	
What we can say is that a ritual the living had once imagined as a way for the dead to visit the homes of their memories had in fact become a search for a sign that these homes ever existed	DEL	
Because after the blankets came down and the tractor disappeared from the barn, when trash and broken glass became the only records of habitation, then it was just fleas and mice and the occasional drunk curled up on the floor with a bottle, hiding from his wife in a place she would never think to look	CON	Sometimes houses become abandoned and owner-less.
And then after that: nothing	DEL	
Only silence and decay, until all that remained was a jumble of broken boards in an overgrown field	DEL	
It was not just the physical home that had been lost to the dead: now no one sets a place for them anymore or anticipates their coming	GEN	There comes a time when no one expects the dead in their former homes anymore.
In recent years, anyone who could be a descendant of the dead has left this countryside for more prosperous regions of Europe, places where it is possible to find not only work, but something that is certain to put more than a few hundred dollars in their pocket each month, and does not require one to muck stalls or buck hay or handle cows' teats	CON	A lot of people have emigrated from Latvia, looking for a better, easier life.
The living might come back, briefly, for a wedding, or a christening, or a funeral, bottles clinking in plastic bags from the airport Duty Free	CON	The emigrants rarely visit their former homes.
But the truth is that the dead now come more frequently than the not-dead; each year, after the harvest, if the stories can be trusted, stumbling through the forests, down the two-lane roads, across the shorn fields, searching for reassurance in a landscape that offers its reply in the form of empty clotheslines, untended graves, winter snows unbroken now by a single step	DEL	
There was a time when migrant flocks of Bewick's swans and whooper swans stopped here each year to winter in the bogs and fens	CON	The region which Inara visits – Gulbene – was named after swans.
And so the region was named for these birds: Gulbene, from the Latvian word <i>gulbis</i> ("swan")	CON	
Located on the country's eastern edge, two hours from the Russian border, this place has witnessed centuries of migration and flight	GEN	For centuries, Gulbene has been in the middle of conflict.
Some years it was members of the Order of the Brothers of the Sword who invaded, emissaries of the pope, their shields decorated with images of crucifixes and sharpened blades, their armor decorated with the spray of pagan blood	DEL	
Other years, it was Ivan the Terrible's men, galloping through on horseback, rapiers drawn and torches in hand	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Occasionally, there were Vikings, shaking snarled beards and shields, as well as soldiers who answered to a Swedish king who preferred to keep his facial hair in a trim Vandyke	DLE	
Mostly though, it was armies dispatched by tsars and tsarinas, or those sent by kaisers	GEN	Gulbene suffered the most under the rule of Russians and Germans.
And after that, men who demanded that they be addressed as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party	DEL	
Or: Führer	DEL	
Once, the people who lived here didn't even bother distinguishing between the different routes that cut through their land	DEL	
They simply called the paths in and out of the region by one name: warroads	GEN	The roads around the region were known as war roads.
The roads through the region are mostly empty now—sometimes you can go hours without seeing another passing car—but there are days when it feels like the travelers of the war roads are out there still, all those ghost armies, advancing, retreating through the landscape, their presence suggested in the graffitied bunkers left to decay in the fields, and in the sudden disappearance of roadside trees, felled to block an incoming army's advance, and never replanted even all these decades later	CON	The harsh history has left an aura of terror.
They are always in the background, the sound of their phantom boots on the landscape as steady as a heartbeat: all these troops, from all these eras, a formation of tattered uniforms and missing limbs, marching through the collective memory, silently, endlessly—the harbingers of flight	DEL	
And everyone in their path runs, is still running, through the years and generations	DEL	
This is where I come from, from this place of flight—daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughter to those who once lived at the edge of the war roads, and who came to feel the roads' terrible pull	GEN	Inara's family comes from Gulbene.
What happened to my family here happened long before I was born, but I know now that my life started the instant the road claimed them	CON	Inara feels a connection to the sufferings of her home and family.
That when it led them away from the land, all those years ago, and scattered them—some to the west, to be dropped at the edge of the ocean they called <i>silent</i> in their old language, and others to the east, to disappear into the territories of the banished—it made their exile mine, as much a part of me as any characteristic governed by heredity, like the nearsightedness that by the time I was seven would reduce my view of the world to what fell within an arm's length in front of me	CON	Due to the war, Inara's family was initially broken up.
Whatever lay in the distance, no matter how hard I tried to make out its contours, was always lost to me	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
It helped that I was raised to believe in the existence of what I could not see	GEN	Inara believes in the paranormal.
The language and stories of my childhood were always referencing hidden places	DEL	
And one of those places waited on the other side of death	DEL	
That's what the old homesick Latvians would say	DEL	
That when we die, we go to live in a land that's found beyond the sun	CON	Latvians believe in life after death.
They said this not as superstition or myth, but as habit, the reflexive tic of centuries of belief, now preserved in figures of speech that tended to emerge late at night, after the drinks had left everyone tremulous and heavy-lidded, such as <i>One day, we will meet in the place that exists beyond the sun</i>	DEL	
Beyond the sun, life is said to be not too dissimilar from this one	DEL	
In fact, it's said that there, we do the same things we've always done, except we are no longer alive	DEL	
Dead farmers look after dead cows that are herded by dead dogs	DEL	
Dead children presumably go to schools where they are taught by dead teachers, who take their grading home at night to apartment buildings full of dead neighbors	DEL	
Dead cats leave dead moles on the doorsteps of the dead	DEL	
There are moments when this strikes me as one of the most strange and beautiful ideas I have ever heard	DEL	
And then there are moments when it makes me terribly sad, imagining a world unfolding parallel to this one where everyone is going through the motions of home, trying to hold on to its shape and memories	DEL	
But it isn't home	DEL	
And now, from within this sadness, a realization: I'm not describing the dead anymore	DEL	
I'm describing us, and our life in the little bowed house that we shared, my grandmother, Livija, my grandfather, Emils, and me.	CON	Inara grew up with her grandparents.
I can still recall the way the house slunk low, like a person trying to hide; the plum tree that dropped its watery fruit on the front lawn in drifts, like snow; how the floor and the walls of the cellar beneath the house were only earth	DEL	
And yet I hesitate to say that this is the place where I grew up	CON	Inara has ambivalent feelings about her grandparents' home in the USA.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Maybe it is more accurate to say that this is the place where I learned of the existence of our true home, the one we could no longer see, but that called to us nonetheless from somewhere out there, far beyond the buzz of the paper mills; the single, ever-spewing spire of the copper smelter that turned the grass of the yards bordering it a mesmerizing yet unsettling chartreuse; and the stacks of shipping containers— corrugated blues and yellows and reds—that formed the edges of our accepted horizon	DEL	
Our true home, so the stories went, like the ones that my grandmother read to me at night from a battered edition of Grimms’ fairy tales, the spine broken and held in place by tape, was far, far away, in the province of the swans, but we could never go back there again	CON	In her childhood, Inara considered Latvia to be her true home, however she believed she could never visit it.
Nor could anyone from that world visit us to remind us of who we were and where we came from, though once, my grandmother’s mother had apparently shown up at our home, moments after her death, more than five thousand miles away, but only my grandmother saw her	CON	Inara’s grandmother believed she was once visited by the ghost of her mother.
She emerged from the seam that runs between darkness and daylight to stand at the edge of my grandmother’s bed, as my grandfather snored and twitched beside her	DEL	
It was the first time my grandmother had seen her mother in more than twenty years, and her face looked withered, like flowers left in a vase without water	DEL	
My grandmother opened her mouth to say something, but before she could speak, before she could form the words <i>forgive me</i> , her mother leaned over and placed a callused palm on my grandmother’s curled head	CON	Inara’s grandmother felt guilt for leaving Latvia.
She let it rest there for a moment	DEL	
Then she disappeared	DEL	
My grandmother seemed to accept the brief terms of this visitation	DEL	
She, too, as I understood it, had disappeared just as quickly from her family’s life, though her vanishing had been the living kind, born of war and panic, the heavy trundle of red-starred tanks over cobblestone, airships swimming overhead, flames where roofs should have been, and from somewhere nearby the sound a building makes just before it crumbles: a whoosh of air, like a breath released from a cracked sternum	CON	Inara’s grandmother abruptly left Latvia due to war.
Alone, with two small children—her husband away at the Russian front—my grandmother had monitored the climax of the Second World War from a rented apartment in the Latvian capital with an address of 71 Peace Street	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Between the choring of the bombs, she breast-fed her newborn son and hoped she could remain in one place long enough for her body to heal, for the bleeding to finish	CON	Inara's grandmother had an infant when she fled.
But as the glass in the windows rippled, and it became clear she couldn't wait where she was any longer, she dropped diapers into a sack and tied a scarf around her shoulders	DEL	
She picked up her three-week-old son	DEL	
Made her two-year-old daughter clasp her hand	GEN	Inara's grandmother had a two-year old daughter when she fled.
And ran	DEL	
As she had explained it to me growing up, there was no time to write a letter, to address it to the family who waited three hours to the east in Gulbene, in the brown-shingled farmhouse where my grandmother had been born, and which she had left only a few years before, the first in her family to venture beyond its boundaries for a new life in the city	DEL, GEN	Inara's grandmother had been the first from the family to move to the city.
The day she left the farm, her whole family had accompanied her to the train station, still in their milking boots, and they had cried and waved at my grandmother until the train finally pulled beyond view	DEL	
Now, there was no time for my grandmother to say good-bye to her mother and her father and her brother and her sister, no way to tell them where she was heading, because even she had no idea	CON	Inara's grandmother did not know where she would end up.
It was too late for her to do anything, except to try to stay on her feet and ahead of the Russian troops, thousands of them, marching behind the battle standard of the USSR, red-silkscreened with hammer and sickle—Latvia's new flag	DEL	
I know now that my grandmother left Latvia at the beginning of October 1944	ZERO	Inara's grandmother left Latvia at the beginning of October 1944.
It was late June 1945 before she finally crossed into British-occupied territory in the north of Germany	CON	
There, she and her children were officially registered as Displaced Persons, ultimately assigned to a refugee camp on the outskirts of the port city of Hamburg, where she and the children sometimes went on day passes to pick through the firebombings' char, burned brick and pooled metals, searching for things to trade or that might fuel their cook-fires	CON	Inara's grandmother traveled through Europe for 9 months until she reached a refugee camp in Germany.
But when she was alive, my grandmother never emphasized the length or the difficulty of her journey across Europe, what she might have seen in her memories that she wished she could forget	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And while the stories she told implied great difficulty and sorrow, she erased them of the grim particulars, made them archetypal enough to feel memorable, recognizably powerful without exposing me to the specificity of her own traumas: <i>A friend from Riga joined me, to help with the children; we slept in the woods at night and dried diapers on branches; we looked for farmhouses and offered to help with the cows in exchange for milk, a place to sleep</i>	CON	In her stories, Inara's grandmother minimized the hardships she endured.
Her story existed for me only in simple outline, like the life-size self-portraits we made in elementary school art class by lying on our backs on a blank expanse of butcher paper, while the teacher traced our jittering bodies, our physical presence in the world suggested through negative space, the hollows held inside the lines	DEL	
In much the same way, I accepted the presence of what went unspoken in my grandmother's war stories as evidence of something that did not have to be made explicit in order to be registered, understood	DEL	
She did not have to say terror or shame or anguish for me to feel these things held inside her, as clearly as if I had held them inside me, too	CON	Inara recognized the emotions her grandmother was not displaying
My grandmother, Livija, chose instead to speak about the place she had left, as if she had never left	GEN	Livija loved to tell stories about Latvia.
Over the years—as she lay on her pallet in the refugee camp, where she would live so long after the war that she and my grandfather could trace the years by the additions to their family, two children becoming four, two boys and two girls; as she clutched the family's passports and entrance papers to the United States and felt the transport plane's rising, its wings tipped to the sea—my grandmother never stopped saying the name of the home she had lost	CON	Inara's grandparents spent years in the refugee camp and welcomed two more children.
T-a-c-o-m-a, she practiced, as the smell of the mills punched through the cracks in the windows of her new home, an apartment in a downtown tenement where the volunteers from Tacoma Lutheran Family Services had indicated through gentle pantomime that the family of six now lived	CON	Inara's grandparents ended up in Tacoma, Washington, USA.
But that word always remained unsure on her tongue	DEL	
It would never sound as natural as the way she said <i>Lembi</i> , which she had first learned from her grandfather, a shoemaker from Gulbene who eschewed whiskers but let his eyebrows grow like cumulus clouds	CON	Livija grew up on a farm called <i>Lembi</i> .
The name he had bestowed on the two-bedroom farmhouse he built under the shelter of two maple trees	CON	The farm was built by Livija's grandfather.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
There he raised his only child, a boy, who would grow up to become my grandmother's father, a man of waxed mustaches and a fine way with hops, known for the batches of ale he kept in the granary, always enough to lend to a wedding or a wake	DEL	
My grandmother's mother was ten years younger than her husband, and everyone agreed that she possessed the patience required to ret the farm's flax and spin its fibers into linen so fine and soft that it felt weightless, yet she was also quick to snap a switch from the nearest tree if she sensed the slightest misbehavior	DEL	
This was the world my grandmother, Livija, was born into: There, she knew it was summer by the smell of fresh mown hay; fall when the saffron milk caps rose from the decay of the forest floor; spring by the storks winging overhead	DEL	
Each day was organized around the rhythm and habits of the cows, and almost as soon as my grandmother and her siblings could walk, they were toddling barefoot behind the slow-hoofed cortege as it mouthed its way across the pastures, and they remained with the herd until evening, when it was time to drive them back to their places in the barn	CON	Livija's family had a cow farm and the children worked as shepherds.
The children did this for years, back and forth, stall to pasture, until they had spent more time in the company of cows than any other living being	DEL	
Long after my grandmother had settled in America, she would visit the dairy barn at the state fair, wandering the labyrinthine complex and appraising each cow with tender eyes	CON	From her childhood, Livija developed warm attitude towards cows.
Always, there would be a cow or two that stirred something close to rapture in her	DEL	
Oh, how beautiful, she would say, standing unself-consciously in her heels among the splatters, taking care to address the animal directly	DEL	
What a fine cow you will be	DEL	
My grandmother spent more than a decade not knowing what had happened to her family and to the farm after she fled Latvia	ZERO	Livija spent more than a decade not knowing what had happened to her family and to the farm after she fled Latvia
Even when she was finally able to reestablish contact with her relatives in Gulbene, communication was sporadic, halting, the letters subject to censors' eyes	CON	The reestablished communication between Livija and her family was unsatisfying.
How far away she felt from the days when she could sit with her family in the kitchen of the farmhouse, everyone nursing cups of hot tea, replaying the events of the day	DEL	
Often, it was a catalog of nothing	DEL	
Maybe a heifer had been born with a broken mouth	DEL	
A cloud had passed overhead in the shape of a girl	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The bees seemed agitated	DEL	
Now, as she sat alone at her kitchen table in Tacoma, crying over the pages of the latest stilted letter— <i>We went far away to work for a time</i> —there was a part of my grandmother that understood she could never return to that place again	DEL	
In the end, my grandmother decided to try to find a way to occupy the space that bordered both realities: until the day she could return to the farm, she would rebuild it here, in America, board by board, through memory	CON	Livija recreated and maintained the image of <i>Lembi</i> in her mind.
At first she did it by herself, silently setting the survey lines	DEL	
She raised the sky just far enough overhead so that it felt as if you could reach up and brush your fingers against it when you lay on your back in the grass	DEL	
She smoothed the fields out to the edges of the horizon, and then summoned the forests, dense and dark	DEL	
Behind the screening branches, she placed the anthills and the badger burrows	DEL	
Reluctantly, she conjured the mosquitoes and horseflies, if only for the sake of accuracy, the way they blackened the summer air	DEL	
Orchard sown, she replanted the gooseberries and currants and let their rows grow unruly, vines curling back on themselves like the ends of her father's mustache	DEL	
She staked the stems of the lolling dahlias and drove posts for the picket fence deep into the soil, but still it would list	DEL	
She bucked hay into the loft, and stacked logs for winter's approach	DEL	
But since this was a world summoned entirely from memory, there were places	DEL	
The milking barn contained stools, but not a single churn	DEL	
The horse grazed endlessly, reins dragging through clover	DEL	
Inside the house, some of the rooms appeared never to have been framed or plastered; the same hallway led to different bedrooms each time it was accessed	DEL	
Outside the kitchen window lilacs bloomed, regardless of the season	DEL	
Like a ghost, my grandfather had simply shown up one day at the refugee camp where my grandmother was living following her flight from Latvia	CON	Livija did not know the fate of her husband and believed he was dead until he appeared at the refugee camp.
My grandmother had spent the last two years fearing he was dead	DEL	
<i>Number of family members?</i> the camp intake forms had asked	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
<i>Four</i> , my grandmother had written, then scratched it out	DEL	
Above it, she wrote much more faintly, <i>Three</i>	DEL	
My grandfather could not hide from her the hole where his eye had once been, but he refused to say anything about his time in the war	CON	Emils had been fighting in the war.
And no one ever asked, even though they knew that this was what made him rock in his chair for hours, his hands fluttering in his lap like birds with snapped wings, that this was what made him slam his fist down on the table even when there was no point to be made	CON	Emils developed mental issues after the war.
As a little girl, I learned to watch for the moments when my grandfather slipped away from us, knew, when the trembling started, that if I put a small hand on his arm and spoke his name, I could eventually make it stop	DEL	
<i>You are here with me, Papa</i> , I would say, trying to call him back	DEL	
And he would agree— <i>yes, yes, yes!</i> —but I could see by the set of his brow he was still someplace else	DEL	
We lived quietly, my grandfather, grandmother and I, rarely venturing far beyond the house, except for my grandparents' nightly walk beneath the freeway underpass and down the dead-end street, past the trailer court and the overgrown field where my grandmother sometimes waded into the grass to pinch the heads off wild chamomile flowers that she then pocketed to dry	CON	Inara grew up with her grandparents.
Two times a week, my grandfather chauffeured us into downtown Tacoma for choir practice and worship services with the other Latvian exiles, all of them drawn to this area by the sponsorship of the local Lutheran church	CON	Livija and Emils were part of the local Latvian community of emigrants.
Few of them had known one another in their old country, but now war and coincidence had made them a community, albeit a small one	DEL	
By the time I came to live with my grandparents, the number of congregants hovered around fifty, from an original three hundred members, though no one was quite sure how to count the woman who everyone suspected must be part Russian, given the suspicious way she made her <i>pirags</i> — with lard in the dough and boiled eggs and beef for filling: like swallowing stones, it was whispered	DEL	
Every Thursday and Saturday, we gathered in a rented church basement, where we sat on metal folding chairs that had been arranged in narrow rows	DEL	
I tried not to stare at the man who had a hook for a hand, or to squirm when suddenly I was crushed against the breasts of a woman who always wept and whispered another girl's name as she embraced me	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The pastor gave long and tremulous sermons in Latvian, and when I grew restless, my grandmother would let me flip through her hymnbook, really just a stack of mimeographs, handwritten scores reconstructed from the congregants' memories, the songs they carried with them when they fled	DEL	
I was always the youngest person in attendance by at least sixty years; the congregants' own children—most of whom had been about my age when they first arrived here as refugees with their parents in the 1950s—were all grown now and deep into the work of making new lives in this new land, sometimes even calling themselves by new names, easier for American tongues to grasp	DEL	
So only the elderly remained, which meant we had cycled through all the weddings and christenings that there would be	DEL	
Now it was only funerals	DEL	
Standing at the graveside we dipped our hands into an old coffee can filled with sand that someone had managed to smuggle out of Communist Latvia, and we took turns scattering it over the coffins' lids	CON	Even when burying their dead outside of Latvia, the Latvian community took care that at least some handfuls of Latvian soil were with the dead.
Then we moved to the heap of raw earth, already studded with shovels	DEL	
At first, the local cemetery didn't know what to make of us, the way we insisted on filling the graves ourselves	DEL	
Sometimes the cemetery still sent its own gravediggers, who watched from behind headstones a few feet away as the old mourners swung their shovel blades, sweating and straining against suits and skirts	DEL	
But the extra help was never needed	DEL	
According to our traditions, no one left until every trace of soil had been scraped back into the hole, every last clod of dirt tamped down	DEL	
We entrusted our dead to a single funeral home, a brick building reminiscent of the Parthenon but located in an area of Tacoma more typically favored by bail bondsmen and pawnshops	DEL	
The location mattered less than the fact that its owners were unquestioning, accommodating, even eager to learn our traditions, if it meant we would bring more business their way	DEL	
If they ever thought it strange that we mixed Lutheranism with old pagan ways, they never said a word	DEL	
They just made sure to keep copies of the Bible translated into Latvian on hand, as well as plenty of caskets crafted from oak, the tree the ancients had considered most sacred	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The ground those caskets were lowered into was in a section of cemetery the Latvians had purchased so that we could always be together, undisturbed	CON	The Latvian community had a designated plot for their burials.
I'd been shown once where my grandparents' places waited, two anonymous rectangles of grass otherwise surrounded by occupied graves, and I liked to test myself whenever we found ourselves at the cemetery to see whether I could find my way back to them without any help, as if practicing for the day when it would fall to me to stand at the edge of the holes into which my grandparents had disappeared, feeling the old songs in my mouth, the weight of the sand from the old coffee can in my hand, the grit that it left behind in the creases of my palms and on the cuffs of my coat	CON	Livija and Emils had bought land plots for their own graves.
It was like a silent command running behind everything we did, but in the cemetery, among the ever-expanding drift of headstones, I could hear it more clearly: <i>watch, listen, remember</i>	CON	Inara felt obliged to gather the emigrants' stories.
This was how I knew someone had died: my grandmother would pull her paring knife from the kitchen drawer and head out to her garden to cut calla lilies, carrying them to the funeral cupped in the hollow of her hand	DEL	
This is how she soothed me back to sleep when I woke crying: the same hollow of her hand cupped against my cheek	DEL	
I began living with my grandparents following the collapse of my parents' marriage, a bitter coming-undone that had left them both emotionally incapable of caring for me; in my mother's case, it was also a legal ruling, her parental rights clipped, like the car she once steered off the road in a haze of drink	CON	Inara grew up with her grandparents.
Custody was awarded to my father—the infant my grandmother had delivered as the bombs rained down on Riga—but my father, for his part, was lost deep in his own anger and sorrow and silence	GEN	Inara's father was the infant Livija fled with from Riga.
Five years home from Vietnam, and he remained as tightly locked inside himself as the day he returned	GEN	Inara's father had mental issues due to war.
Just as his own father had done, a quarter of a century earlier	DEL	
My father's not-speaking was much quieter than my grandfather's, not so much a refusal as a ceding to a kind of paralysis	DEL	
He went to work, he went to school, but he seemed somewhere else, somewhere far away	DEL	
And so my grandparents made a place for me in their home while he tried to find his way back to himself	DEL	
Where once I had known only one word for <i>mother</i> , now there were two	CON	Inara considered Livija her mother and their relationship was very close.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
My grandmother was the one who took me to the backyard and showed me how to find the sweetest raspberries, hidden in the shade of the leaves	DEL	
She was the one who set me on a kitchen chair, draped an apron around my neck and let me sink my fists into the warmth of rising dough	DEL	
She was the one who said my name over and over again until it sounded like a song, the one who took me in her lap and comforted me after I spent hours on the porch with my little blue suitcase waiting for the mother who promised but seldom came	DEL	
<i>I am now raising little Inara</i> , my grandmother wrote to the relatives back in Latvia, who by this time she had not seen in thirty years—letters I would not discover until I was nearly forty, and had begun to visit Latvia myself	CON	Livija considered Inara her daughter and their relationship was very close.
<i>I have fallen deeply in love with her, as she has with me</i>	DEL	
<i>She calls this her home</i>	DEL	
<i>But at night sometimes she jumps up screaming: “I want my daddy</i>	DEL	
<i>Where is my daddy?” I don’t know why, but she has not called out for her mother</i>	DEL	
<i>At times, Inara calls me mommy</i>	DEL	
<i>We speak Latvian at home, and she understands everything</i>	DEL	
<i>She is enthralled with books and I read aloud to her from titles meant for much older children—stories of Hansel and Gretel and Snow White</i>	DEL	
<i>Sometimes, she sits alone with piles of books and “reads” by herself</i>	DEL	
<i>We have no neighbors with children she can play with, but maybe it’s not so important yet—she turns just three in December</i>	DEL	
<i>When she first came into my care, Inara was so terribly anxious; it’s required real effort to bring the little child to this place of calm</i>	DEL	
And two years later she wrote: <i>Inara’s mother comes to get her for visits only now and again</i>	DEL	
What she did not share in her letters she instead documented in a small spiral notebook, which I would not see until years after her death	DEL	
Once, I returned from one of those rare weekend visits with a burn on my chin in the shape of a lit cigarette	CON	Inara’s mother was incapable of caring for her while Inara was a child.
And a few months after that entry, she wrote again in the notebook: <i>Tonight, when Inara came back it was like she was in a trance</i>	DEL	
<i>Her mother laid her on my bed, and her eyes were open, but there was no motion in her for a very long time</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
For as long as she lived, my grandmother never spoke to me about my mother, about what she did or did not do, what had happened or not happened in my earliest years, that I would need to be taken from her	DEL	
And I never asked, as if I agreed that this was something that should not be given voice	DEL	
In the region of Latvia where my grandmother was raised, there are people who believe even to this day that the right words spoken in the right combination are a way of resurrecting what has been lost	DEL	
Or, as an old man once asked me: Did I know that there were times when words could become more than words? It's true, he insisted	DEL	
Words can become as real as anything we see with our eyes or feel with these hands	DEL	
I saw a man put out a fire using only words, he said	DEL	
The house was engulfed and they'd run out of water, but then the man arrived, and he walked in circles around the house, very calm, one way and then another, repeating something into the flames	DEL	
This was how my grandmother sounded when she spoke to me of her former home, the farm she had rebuilt from memory, like someone who believed that the structure of it could be protected, even saved, through her telling	CON	Livija often told stories of <i>Lembi</i> to Inara and they felt as if they were physically there.
We might be standing at the edge of my grandparents' property, which abutted a city salvage yard, feeding scraps of paper to the burn barrel	DEL	
Then the wind would start, rattling the leaves of the nearby birch, and in its chatter my grandmother would hear the voices of the trees she had once moved through each day	DEL	
Do you hear it? she would ask, urging me to follow her deep into the black and white thickets of her memories	DEL	
This is what it sounds like when they speak	DEL	
Or maybe one morning we would wake to snow, and as we looked out the window together, she would remake its falling with her words until it became the hip-high drifts that sucked at the hooves of the draft horse, now harnessed to a sleigh upon which my grandmother's family rode, their laps weighted with blankets and furs	DEL	
She led me to the nest in the grass where she hid with her little brother from her mother's calls; let me peer into the cradle of her baby sister, born when my grandmother was fourteen	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She revealed to me the location of the chest in which she had concealed love letters from a boy she thought she would marry before my grandfather, and sometimes I suspected I could hear the drawer scraping open inside her, as if she were pulling out the letters to reread them	DEL	
Each time she showed me something, it filled in a new location on the map of the property I now carried within me, until I began to think I knew the way back on my own	DEL	
But even when I tried to retrace our path faithfully, because I was following my memories of her memories, it was like one of those pictures I had once seen where you thought you were dealing with a single, static image, say, a tree in full leaf, but depending on which direction you tipped the frame, the composition was completely altered; now that same tree was little more than withered branches	CON	Inara developed her own memories of memories but found them always inconsistent.
Sometimes the dog that barked at my approach was black and white; other times he was white marked with black	DEL	
Sometimes my great- grandmother appeared in the yard, bent over the stump that turned wet with hens' blood after the thwack of the axe upon their necks, or maybe she was stoking the wood-fired stove that I had been warned was so hot it would cause the flesh of a curious child's hand to slide off like the skin of a snake	DEL	
Other times, I would find her in bed, wrapped in a wet tangle of sheets, my grandmother at her side, pressing a spoon against her mother's mouth, the same way my grandmother fed me when I was sick	DEL	
I knew her brother and sister were there, wandering the property, too	DEL	
My grandmother had gone to great lengths to help me recognize them—his knees were always skinned and he liked to help with the bees; she was small and fast, like the kittens who lived under the barn and would not let you hold them in your hands—but I found that whenever I invited them to join me, there was nothing where their faces should have been, as if I were peering into the well on the property where my grandmother cautioned you should not play, because if you fell, you would never touch bottom	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
I don't know if she grew tired of waiting, or if she simply came to accept the idea that the Latvia she had called home could only ever be accessed in memory, but where once she and my grandfather sat at kitchen table pecking out letters to the editor of the local paper on an old Olympia typewriter, the keys spackled with Wite-Out, so that their demands for the end to Latvia's illegal occupation sometimes looked like demands for an end to Ltv's llegal occupton, they now sat at the same table quizzing each other on the elements of the US Constitution, the names of the state's congressional delegation	CON	Having lived in the USA for a long period of time, Livija gave up on the wish to return to Latvia.
They did this, even as the television in the other room, always on in the background, and always tuned to CNN, began to relay images of hammers bashing sections of the Berlin Wall, of more than a million protesters clasping hands to form a human chain stretching unbroken from Tallinn to Vilnius	DEL	
My grandmother was in her seventies when she finally became a naturalized citizen of the United States, forswearing that she would <i>renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen</i>	GEN	Livija became citizen of the USA, not long before Latvia became independent.
Not long after, Latvia declared its independence	DEL	
She did not hurry back, as some exiles did	DEL	
Many went immediately, returning with applications for Latvian passports and suitcases full of jewelry fashioned from Latvian amber, the ancient resin of prehistoric trees entombed at the bottom of the Baltic Sea, <i>a marrow discharged by trees belonging to the pine</i> , as Pliny the Elder described it, once coveted by the Romans and said to bring its wearers strength; and bottles of Black Balsam, Latvia's national liquor, a drink that tastes as if one is alternately tonguing the unfurled buds of trees, then their hot pitch	DEL	
It's revered for its medicinal qualities, is said to have brought Catherine the Great back from the brink of death, though in truth it is demonstrably curative only in that the first sip scours almost pleasantly from throat to bowel	DEL	
Among other exiles, I sensed euphoria, a strident reclaiming—"Nyet Nyet Soviet" T-shirts and family portraits taken on the steps of the Freedom Monument in downtown Riga tucked into that year's Christmas cards	DEL	
Yet my own family seemed hesitant by comparison	DEL	
What I know of my grandmother's homecoming: when she saw her siblings again, for the first time in nearly fifty years, she wept, and they wept, and then everyone started talking at once and didn't stop until dawn	CON	Livija visited free Latvia once.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Later, as everyone slept, my grandmother let herself out, and walked the fields and forests for hours, alone	DEL	
One day, she asked to go clean the graves of her parents and grandparents	DEL	
She rubbed moss off the headstones, picked fallen branches from the ground	DEL	
She slipped flowers in vases	DEL	
Then, as she backed away, she raked the dirt around the headstones, erasing all footprints, all signs that she had ever been there at all	DEL	
Looking back now, I am surprised at how little I asked my grandmother about that trip and how little she offered, as if together we had reached the unspoken decision that it would be my job to retain the remembered version of her old home—the re-created farm of her youth that she had gifted to me—rather than the contemporary version she had discovered on her return	DEL	
Not long after my grandparents' trip to Latvia, my grandfather's heart began to fail, and within five years he was dead	CON	Inara's grandfather died in the USA.
Less than six months after we buried him—dipping our hands into the old coffee can, now filled with the soil of free Latvia—one of my grandmother's neighbors dropped by to see how she was faring	DEL	
When the neighbor knocked but received no response, she put her eye to a gap in the crocheted hanging my grandmother had placed over the window in the front door	DEL	.
She spotted my grandmother's glasses first, resting in the pile of the rug, then the soles of my grandmother's slippers	DEL	
After the first stroke, I told myself that my grandmother would recover, that there would still be time for us to go back through her memories again	DEL	
But a second, stronger stroke followed, and this time she disappeared into territory that I couldn't access	DEL	
Sometimes, when I went to visit her at the nursing home where she now lived, and if I happened to catch her in the half-conscious moments just following a nap, she might string together a few labored words, enough to tell me that she was spending time with those long lost to her, my grandfather, her parents, her brother, how they had been traveling together to all the places she had never been before, like Paris	CON	Being of age, Livija had two strokes and was put in a nursing home where she spent more time her mind and her memories.
Other times, she was back in the refugee camps; once, she told me she had been nursing the infant of a campmate who had died—I still have milk, and the baby is so small—but she never again mentioned Latvia or the farm	DEL	

CHAPTER 3

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Once there was a time when the living made a habit of sitting with the newly dead	CON	After a person died, people would sit around it.
The dead would be offered a special chair, and everyone would crowd around to ask the dead: Why did you leave this world? Then, all the living would call out in turn the reasons they believed the dead should remain with them	DEL	
When they ran out of things to say, or they could no longer keep their eyes open for want of sleep, the living would place the body of the dead in its coffin	DEL	
Next, they set plates of food on the table, especially beans and peas, said to mimic the shape of tears	DEL	
And then, before they turned out the lights and went to bed, the living would lift the coffin's lid and leave it partway off, so that the dead could get up in the night if it desired, and have one last meal alone	CON	The living left a plate of food for the dead in case they wanted one last meal.
In the morning, the living joined the dead for breakfast, plates on knees, or balanced on the coffin's edge	DEL	
The grandmothers saved their best bites to place on the plate of the dead	DEL	
Your road is long, so long, they would say	DEL	
Here is some strength for what's ahead	DEL	
And whatever beer or bread was left, they took to the barn, to sprinkle in the cows' stalls, so the herd could mourn, too	DEL	
The old ways held that the dead never stopped being considered members of the family, and it was up to the living to try and impress upon the dead this fact	DEL	
For the first few years after she died, I waited for my grandmother, Livija, to visit me, as her mother had done for her, but she never came	CON	Inara waited to meet Livija's ghost like Livija had met her mother's.
I said her name to myself at night, when I couldn't sleep, like a summons—thinking of how, if I said it as an English speaker would, the first syllable sounded like “live,” as in the command form of the verb “to live,” the “j” soft, voiced like the letter “y”: <i>LIV-ee-yah</i>	DEL	
And if I pronounced it the Latvian way, the first syllable sounded like the word “leave,” as in “to leave someone”	DEL	
I had asked for a few of her things in the hope they might serve as talismans to my grief: a calla lily spaded from her garden's soil; her old mixing bowl, in which she soaked threads of saffron in warm milk to color the sweet dough she braided to celebrate our birthdays and name days; a velvet evening gown from the 1970s, soft as sable, the color of crushed violets, copied from an image in <i>Vogue</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
It didn't fit me and I didn't want it to; my grandmother, a talented seamstress who could sew without patterns, and whose stitches were so precise that her garments could be worn inside out, had tailored the gown so perfectly to her own form, that even hanging in my closet, it returned to the world the shape and weight of the space that I had known her physical body to occupy	CON	Livija was a master seamstress.
And while these things gave her absence a kind of presence in my life, they could not help me picture her with the kind of clarity that would make her feel real to me again, complicated and full, more than these fading traces of memory: the brown of her eyes, irises edged in blue, like the bark of a madrone tree set against a clear sky; the way she smelled of sunlight, clothing left to dry on the line; the shape of her curlers beneath the kerchiefs she wore home each week after having her hair set at Sharon's Beauty Parlor—a double-wide trailer located in the motor court tucked behind the neighborhood corner store that did brisk trade in both penny candy and adult magazines; the angry divots her clip-on earrings left when unclasped; the sound of her body, released from its girdle, soft and low, like the exhalation of air that releases a dandelion of its seeds; the method she employed to test a bolt of fabric before committing to buy it: grabbing a handful of material and clenching it in her fist for several seconds	CON	Inara missed Livija after her death.
No good, she would say	DEL	
Wrinkles too easily	DEL	
It will look old and worn before you leave the house!	DEL	
She tried to learn to drive—once	DEL	
She crushed the neighbor's fence beneath the back wheels of the car	DEL	
After that, if my grandfather was not home, she walked anywhere she needed to go	DEL	
She could peel an apple without ever lifting her knife, the fruit unwound from itself in gentle drifts in the bottom of her kitchen sink	DEL	
Come here, she would say, when I woke and complained of cold, opening her bathrobe as if it was her skin, and letting me slip inside	DEL	
Sometimes, when we went shopping together, clerks would insist they did not understand what she was trying to say, even as they bit back laughter, and she tried so hard to stay calm, composed, in her handmade clothes	CON	Immigrant families sometimes faced ridicule.
Unwrinkled	DEL	
I hate them for this still	DEL	
The problem was that my memories of her were now reduced to little more than anecdotes, lists, not the true sense of a life, complicated, evolving, embedded in an unfolding present	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
At the same time, it had also grown harder for me to locate my grandmother in our shared version of her past	CON	Inara found it hard to travel to <i>Lembi</i> in her mind without Livija's help.
I tried to find her again in the stories that she had left to me of the farm, but they felt brittle now, unfamiliar, all the things that had gone unspoken, the absences and elisions and silences so much more apparent now that I was forced to encounter them on my own	DEL	
It didn't help to recruit my father	DEL	
Although he had grown up hearing many of the same stories, and he had come to the United States when he was still young enough that he could switch between English and Latvian without accent, to call back what he knew of the family's history, his memories of growing up in the refugee camps, caused him real pain	CON	It was painful for Inara's father to remember his childhood in the refugee camp, so he did not talk about it.
So he held back the words	DEL	
He told me once that he remembered a stretch in his adolescence when he could not speak without stuttering	DEL	
His brother and his younger sister recalled their own periods of stammering, too	DEL	
It wasn't that my father and his siblings didn't want to hear their mother's stories, or weren't interested in them	DEL	
For a long time, they simply did not know	DEL	
Recently, my father's younger sister, who had been just a year old when the family arrived in the United States, told me she did not learn of the details of her mother's flight from Latvia until after she had graduated from high school, until after she had left the house, and even then, the details were scant	CON	Livija was hesitant to reveal her difficult past to her children.
In my father's case, it seemed to me that his reluctance to engage with the family history felt almost protective, as if to place himself inside of it again—to investigate the deliberate silences that it contained, the home that had been left behind, the hole where his father's eye should have been, the missing months of his own infancy, set against the war's end—might actually hold a personal danger	DEL	
I use the word <i>danger</i> because on the rare occasions he attempted to enter these spaces, to look directly into them, he was quickly overcome, and would shut down, as if the past traumas he had been exposed to were not something that he had survived, but something still happening, the present-tense intensity of it all too much to bear	DEL	
When my grandparents returned to Latvia for their first and only visit after the war, after Latvia regained its independence, my father had gone with them	GEN	Inara's father had also visited Latvia once, with his parents.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
To this day, he cannot speak of the experience without crying, finally seeing the country he had left before he could ever know it, visiting the region where his mother and father were raised, living according to its rhythms, staying long enough to begin to work alongside his relatives, helping to lay a new roof on the barn, collecting honey from the hives	CON	Remembering Latvia made Inara's father very emotional.
And yet, once the trip was over and my father was back home, it was almost as if the emotional force of what he had experienced frightened him in some way, and he retreated deep inside himself	CON	Due to his traumas, Inara's father was very closed-off.
He didn't consider returning to Latvia again for twenty years, not until I began to travel there, and although I know he felt a deep and abiding love for the relatives he had met and lived alongside, he had not been able to bring himself to write or to call them in all that time	DEL	
I don't know why I find it so hard, he told me once	DEL	
Why can't I break out of my shell, sometimes	DEL	
What is the Latvian word for hermit?	DEL	
Years later, I would recognize my father in a story a colleague once told me about visiting a facility where those who had seen war were treated for severe post-traumatic stress	GEN	Inara suspects that her father suffered from PTSD.
Of all the things she saw and heard, the woman said, what haunted her still was the way staff approached anyone who appeared in genuine anguish	DEL	
Always, they started with the same question, gentle but insistent: <i>Where are you right now?</i>	DEL	
Not to remind the patients of where their bodies were, but to acknowledge that our memories are real places in which it is possible to become trapped	DEL	
The woman and I worked together at the same newspaper as reporters	DEL	
It was the only job I had ever spoken of wanting since I was in grade school, already so comfortable inhabiting a history that was not my own, that even then, when asked what I wanted to do when I grew up, I claimed a living that would allow me to observe the living of others	CON	Inara made a career out of gathering and preserving stories.
I slipped business cards behind screen doors, the name of the paper I worked for on one side, a scribbled note on the other: <i>I am truly sorry about</i>	DEL	
<i>If you ever feel like talking about the life that was lost, I'm here to listen</i>	DEL	
I said this regularly to strangers, never once considering whether this was something that I should instead be saying to myself	DEL	
It's interesting to me now to think that I had deliberately chosen a profession where I was actively discouraged from ever using the word <i>I</i> , from ever inserting myself in the frame	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And yet, in the years following my grandmother's death, I found myself writing different versions of the same story over and over again	CON	Much of what Inara wrote about had to do with abandonment and loneliness.
Of abandoned amusement parks, where elk now grazed in what had once been the parking lot, where sedge and Scotch broom slowly swallowed all evidence of the log flume ride, the snack shack, the miniature train	DEL	
Of a house where a room on the second floor had been converted into an aviary by a man who had discovered the thrumming of birds' wings was the only thing that could distract him from his despair	DEL	
Until one day, it couldn't anymore	DEL	
And still, as his ex-wife sorted through his remaining things, the sparrows winged in circles around the room, empty, except for a single chair, positioned so you could imagine him sitting, alone, taking in the arc of their flight, night after night	DEL	
Of a bench in the city's oldest park, dedicated to a man who once climbed to its highest point, and as the sun began to drop in the sky, drenched himself in lighter fluid, then flinted a match	DEL	
<i>Come sit</i> , says a sign on the bench, <i>And know that you are loved</i>	DEL	
A sign that also bears the inscription of the man's name, and an engraving of a dove, because, and this is not written there, but can be learned only by tracing the sign back to his mother, who put it there, for someone, anyone, to find, and to ask, so she could remember once more:	DEL	
[He] was my firstborn, and you know, I was so tired, I would cradle him and talk to him and I thought I was calling him love, but after a while, I realized, I'm so tired I'm saying dove, but then I thought, what's so wrong with that, dove is beautiful, too, so I called him my dove.	DEL	
I wrote these stories as if secretly assembling a list of locations where it was difficult to distinguish the boundaries between what had been taken away from this world and what remained	DEL	
I wrote: We are surrounded by invisible cities, places constructed entirely of memory, of suggestion: the remnants of a foundation, broken slabs of concrete, a clearing in a field, an unusually ordered stand of trees	DEL	
I wrote, in other words, like a person trying to assure herself that the shape of what was missing could be used to rebuild that which she didn't even know she'd lost	DEL	
And then, at last, my grandmother came to me, just not in the way I had expected	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
One night, my father brought over a box of items that he'd found while cleaning the last of the things from my grandparents' house, where he had gone to live following the end of his second marriage	DEL	
These were things which did not seem to have any discernible value, but which he could not bring himself to give away	DEL	
He wondered if I might have any use for them	DEL	
Inside, I found spools of silken thread; a music box with a pull-string that my grandmother had played to calm me when she lay me down for afternoon naps on her bed; and a yellow and green scarf, clearly woven by hand	DEL	
My father said he had found the scarf deep in one of my grandmother's dresser drawers	CON	Inara finds a scarf that Livija had brought with her from Latvia.
It was old, fraying in places	DEL	
I had never seen her wear it in all the years I knew her	DEL	
But it still smelled of her and so I took it	DEL	
Later, while going through some old photographs, I found one that had been taken in my grandparents' Riga apartment not long before she fled Latvia	DEL	
I had always understood that almost nothing from my grandparents' old life had survived, that my grandmother had emerged from her journey along the war roads with only the clothes she happened to be wearing the day she fled	DEL	
But as soon as I saw the photograph, I recognized it: the scarf	DEL	
It was unmistakable, knotted at the hollow of my grandmother's throat	DEL	
Where once stories had seemed the only way to access her past, now, suddenly, something tangible had surfaced, pointing the way back to where it all began: proof of what could be made and unmade, then made again; the complexity of the pattern invisible only until you sit still long enough to follow the unraveling threads, retrace their individual paths, so many intricate connections, gifted to you by the silent, insistent hands of the dead	CON	The scarf for Inara is tangible proof that Livija's stories were once the reality.

#### CHAPTER 4

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The woman who could be my grandmother, but is not, motions for me to follow her into the weary house	CON	Ausma invites Inara into her house.
I can hear the chirruping of a bad hip as she hitches slowly down the narrow hallway, which is lined with tomato starts and baskets of flower bulbs, white with bonemeal, knobbly with dirt and age	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
As she leads me into what appears to be a sitting room, I see her draw a balled-up handkerchief from the cuff of her cardigan and dab it at her eyes—eyes that I must keep convincing myself are not, in fact, my grandmother’s eyes	CON	Ausma is emotional upon meeting Inara. Inara finds Ausma similar to Livija.
My grandmother Livija’s eyes were brown, edged in blue, I remind myself	DEL	
This woman’s are blue, edged in brown	DEL	
She scrapes a chair back from the table, indicates I should sit	DEL	
It’s easier for her to let photographs speak	CON	Ausma shows Inara a family photo album.
Here, she says, wresting a thick album from a cabinet in the corner of the room	DEL	
She sets it on the table between us, lifts away the yellowing layers of parchment that cover each face like a caul	DEL	
<i>Livija</i> , she says	DEL	
And my grandmother appears to us, a young woman, the hem of her skirt hovering above the summer-stiffened grass, her face turned slightly as if she registered the sound of her name	DEL	
Next to her, a boy buttoned into a suit as rigid and unyielding as the fence posts in front of which they pose, itching neck and rakish grin stifled— <i>Janis!</i> —said just like that, an exclamation, the sound of uncontained braying, my grandmother’s brother	DEL	
So this must be you? I ask, pointing to a little girl who sits on a chair between the other two in the photograph	DEL	
Her hair is pulled into braids, her feet end in stiff boots	DEL	
She looks like she has been swinging them back and forth	DEL	
She nods	DEL	
<i>Ausma</i>	DEL	
It means dawn or daybreak in Latvian	DEL	
A lightening	DEL	
My grandmother’s sister, born when my grandmother, Livija, was fourteen, and whom I have specifically traveled here to meet, my <i>history in flesh and blood</i>	CON, GEN	Inara has travelled to Latvia to meet Ausma – Livija’s younger sister.
Was this portrait taken at the farm? I ask Ausma	CON	Inara tries to initiate a conversation about the farm Ausma grew up in.
Yes, she says	DEL	
My grandmother told me all about the farm, I say	DEL	
Ausma doesn’t immediately respond	DEL	
It sounded like an incredible place, I say	DEL	
She flips a page	DEL	
I can hear a clock somewhere in the house, its second hand conducting the tiny eternity that has opened up between us	CON	Inara feels that Ausma does not want to talk about the farm.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
You should know that your grandmother’s stories aren’t my stories, Ausma says at last	GEN	Ausma declares that she has different memories of life in the farm than Livija.
Her memories aren’t my memories	DEL	
For years, people had asked me when I finally planned to visit the Latvia of my grandmother’s stories, and I always had an excuse ready, about work, about money	CON	Prior to coming to Latvia, Inara feared that her image might become undone if she visited Latvia.
It didn’t occur to me then that my hesitancy might have had more to do with fear—specifically, the fear that such a trip, rather than confirming the general outlines of the memories my grandmother had gifted me, could only, inevitably, complicate them	DEL	
Friends often want to know what that first visit was like, what it felt like in that instant to be reunited with long lost family	DEL	
And I always wonder whether my answer is too quiet to make sense to anyone else—we sat, I say, we sat, and we wept, and we ate, and we laughed, and we ate, and we wept some more—but it is the instant recognition I felt in the presence of that quiet, something continuous, vital, enduring, the assumed natural state of things, that I always return to; a memory of such pure and overwhelming contentment, a sense of peace, unlike anything I had ever known in my life before, that I wonder if I do understand something of the intensity of the memories that have kept my father from speaking, the intensity of a past that feels as if it is still happening inside of us	CON	Inara instantly felt at home upon meeting her relatives in Latvia for the first time.
Go ahead	DEL	
Ask me: <i>Where are you right now?</i> Here is what I would tell you: I’m sitting	DEL	
I’m sitting at a table	DEL	
I’m sitting at a table with Ausma and her husband, a man named Harijs, who, although he is in his mid-eighties, has just been scrambling around on the roof, checking for a possible leak	GEN, DEL	Ausma has a husband named Harijs.
Do you know how many times I should have died? he asks, as he takes my hands in his hands, tar-stained, stretched by years of labor to the size of bear traps, triggered, lying flat	DEL	
Shh, says Ausma, poking him, though not unkindly, not now	DEL	
We are joined by two of Ausma and Harijs’s three children, and their children’s children	DEL	
Also at the table that day is the family’s first great-grandchild, a girl, just turned two, and when I hear her name for the first time, I have to ask the family to repeat it because it sounds so much like my grandmother’s name: Liva	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
We are seated like this, so many generations, so close to one another, that every voice seems to begin inside my own chest	DEL	
My lips are swollen from shots of sweet muscat, or maybe it is the salt of my own tears	DEL	
Eat, someone says	DEL	
Drink, someone else says	DEL	
Hours pass	DEL	
There is no room to walk around the table where we toast and cry and eat and laugh, so Liva crawls across my lap to reach her grandmother—Ausma’s youngest daughter, my second cousin, a woman named Ligita, who upon seeing me for the first time, ran forward and embraced me so fiercely that I felt my own ribs under the pressure of her forearms, work-strong, sunned to the color of cloves	DEL	
We’ve waited for you, she said, as she held me	DEL	
We waited, and now you’re really here	DEL	
I can feel Ausma studying me from her place across the table, and whenever I meet her gaze, I read her expression as one of overwhelming happiness, but also great sorrow, as if in me she recognizes someone temporarily restored to her, but also still lost	CON	Inara, for her family in Latvia, is a representative of those who left.
I, in turn, study Ausma	DEL	
Her hair, downy as a catkin, combed so quickly I can still trace the pass of each time	DEL	
Her skin is remarkably smooth, like tumbled stone	DEL	
Only her forehead is rifted and seamed—the kind of furrowing that is the result of sustained intensity, stress, exhaustion	DEL	
She downs a single glass of sweet wine, presses a knuckle to her lips to stifle a belch, then winks at me	DEL	
In some ways, she feels lighter than I ever remember my grandmother being, less restrained somehow	CON	Inara constantly compares Ausma and Livija.
Like someone who keeps her sweetness and joy close to the surface, but also her anger, I think, looking at her hands, nicked and seamed with the white of old wounds, never stitched, left instead to find their own way to close	DEL	
The kind of anger that helps a person stay alive	DEL	
Tea? someone asks	DEL	
And as we wait for the scream of the kettle, Ausma decides now is the perfect time to take me to meet the rest of our dead	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Out comes her album again, and she flips through the pages with the solemn efficiency of a tour guide tasked with escorting me through my unknown past: a wave to the ancient fraternity of grandfathers, leather-skinned and possessed of an uncanny knowledge of the cultivation of facial hair; the godmothers of names long forgotten; men dressed in uniforms for wars that were fought for sides she cannot recall	CON	Going through the family photo album is an easier way for Ausma to talk about the past.
Once, briefly, my great-great-grandmother steps out to meet us, ghostly, so faint even Ausma is momentarily unconvinced of her existence— <i>I think that’s my grandmother, yes, no, yes</i> A skirted figure, sitting in the gloom of what appears to be an agricultural shed; clearer is the lamb she holds by its two front legs, tender belly exposed to us, the legs blurred, kicking	DEL	
Its appearance is followed by a succession of wedding dresses, white as the lamb’s pelt, empire-waisted, drop-waisted, each, regardless of the era, modeled by an unsmiling woman who also wears the Latvian bride’s traditional crown of flowers	DEL	
Did my grandmother have a wedding photograph? I ask	DEL	
Ausma does not seem to hear me	DEL	
Here is my wedding photograph! she says	DEL	
I was sad because my dress got dirty and my roses were wilting	DEL	
Now she is taking me to see the corpses	DEL	
Formal funeral portraits: the body in its casket, the casket borne on the shoulders of the grieving to the cemetery plot	DEL	
But first, this is where the body was laid out, in the front yard, under the linden trees, amid heaps of cut flowers	DEL	
Covered in a white linen sheet, only the face is exposed, already hollowing in death, collapsing along its ridges, sinking like a roof staved by snow	DEL	
Suited and kerchiefed, the grieving circle the body at the photographer’s instructions	DEL	
And then—his flash	DEL	
In this instant, all eyes are turned to the body	DEL	
The body’s face already turned toward home	DEL	
And then, a new page	DEL	
Where is this? I ask, pointing to a portrait of Ausma, her mother, and brother	DEL	
They are posing with another couple in a room with rough white walls, the dull brass of what appears to be a bed frame visible in the background, a single potted plant, hunched over, embarrassed, trying to shed its drooping leaves	DEL	
The women in the photograph all look off to the left, as if avoiding eye contact with the photographer	DEL	
The men look directly into the lens	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And the Ausma who is here with me in this little dining room with a view to the surrounding pastures, empty now of cows, is making her way back there, too—I can feel it—as if she has pushed away from the table and shuffled out the front door, past the flea-gnawing dogs, the cats dug into the cool dirt beneath the cherry trees, across fields and through forests, heading deep into the wilds of her memories, emerging, finally, when she has reached the girl in that photograph	CON	
She regards herself	CON	
I'm in Siberia, she says	CON	
Later, in the state archives in Riga, I will find hundreds of photographs like the one Ausma showed me of the white-walled room in Siberia, the same composition, but different faces, the work of enterprising itinerant photographers who roamed the region's remote settlements, proposing to snap the portraits of the exiles who lived there in exchange for whatever they could offer in return	CON	Inara learns that Ausma and her family had been exiled to Siberia.
Scavenged berries, socks, sewing needles fashioned from fish bones	DEL	
They resurrected the banished, restored them to sight, so that it was possible to imagine they existed once more in the world of the living	DEL	
In some of the portraits, I notice the women are wearing a similar dress	DEL	
It takes me a while to realize that it probably is the same dress, passed from one exile to another so that each might feel she looks her best for the photographer	DEL	
Who is the couple? I ask Ausma	DEL	
They were our neighbors there, Ausma says	DEL	
Latvians, too	DEL	
They came on the same train	DEL	
I study their faces	DEL	
The woman wears a kerchief, which, according to the old ways, means she is married, but she looks more like the mother or even the grandmother of the man who stands protectively behind the chair where she sits	DEL	
Her breasts are heavy, finishing in her lap	DEL	
She grips one hand with the other, her fingers tensed, clawed	DEL	
Her chin juts forward in the way of someone who has lost all her teeth, her mouth soft, quaggy, like a field after weeks of rain	DEL	
She had a baby, Ausma says	DEL	
A newborn, just a few weeks old	DEL	
It died on the way	DEL	
Ausma pushes up from the table, leaving me with the album, and shuffles off	DEL	
Then quietly, over her shoulder, as if an afterthought: One of the guards took the body from her, then threw it out the doors of the train	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
To be part of a family is to know instinctively the subtleties behind what remains unsaid and why	CON	At first, Inara was unsure how to navigate and find out about the past without hurting her relatives.
And yet, with my new, long lost family, it was clear that I still had so much more to learn	DEL	
About Ausma and Siberia, and what happened to her after my grandmother left Latvia	DEL	
But also, the farm	DEL	
I had assumed someone from our family must still be living at <i>Lembi</i> , because I had not heard otherwise	DEL	
And yet, since my arrival, no one had brought it up, or suggested that we go there, and I could sense the silence surrounding it is something soft, vulnerable, like the things that are revealed when an old log is lifted	DEL	
I didn't know enough yet to intuit the outlines of what was not there—though I had begun to suspect Siberia and the farm were somehow psychically linked, in a way that makes one silence impossible to understand outside the context of the other	DEL	
And so, I decided, at last, to ask if someone could take me to Lembi	DEL	
In the quiet that follows, i can hear the shrilling of sparrows outside, the exaggerated yipping of a puppy	DEL	
Through the window, I glimpse the dog's silhouette: pawing and biting at the shadows the birds cast as they swoop over the lawn	DEL	
The puppy belongs to Ligita and her husband, Aivars, a man with the ability to cultivate the kind of mustache the ancient fathers from the photographs would have admired, and an encyclopedic knowledge of what it means to be self-sufficient, down to milling his own wood by hand in a shed at the back of his house	DEL	
The puppy is a German shepherd who was found abandoned, starving, in the parking lot of a nearby hamlet where Ligita works as a bookkeeper, signing checks for pensioners, writing receipts for library fines paid in change	DEL	
Gone, I think I hear someone say over the cries of the dog and the birds	DEL	
I wait for more	DEL	
But the silence continues to extend between us, drifting like a fine mist of wood released by Aivars's saw, until it occurs to me that no one feels comfortable giving me the words for what this means, that they need me to discover it on my own	DEL	
I'm just curious about the place where my grandmother grew up, I say	DEL	
I have no other expectations, if you could just show me the way	DEL	
And at that, the room seems to contract with relief	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Off to the car we trundle, including the baby, tiny Liva, shod in rubber boots, trying with unbending knees to outtrot the puppy who pursues her, openmouthed, grinning, desperate to lash her with its tongue	CON	Her relatives take Inara to see <i>Lembi</i> .
As we back down the driveway, he dances in place, dribbling pee, trying to contain the torture he feels at being left behind	DEL	
From the car window we see storks, gliding to standing in the overwintered fields, legs the color of the hottest coals puncturing the last riming seal of snow	DEL	
Here: smoke hanging above a chimney, weak, bowing, like the vertebrae of a grandmother with bad back, there: a pile of hay, gray with rot	DEL	
A cat, belly- crawling through the mud, stopping to shake its paws with the fervor of someone trying to revive feeling in cold-numbered extremities	DEL	
A woman, balanced on stacked heels, cell phone in hand, taking the brunt of the debris kicked up by the wheels of the car on her bare legs, headed down a stretch of road where there are only fields	DEL	
An old man, glimpsed briefly, deep in a forested stretch—untamed woods, pathless—tugging a grocery cart	DEL	
When the car finally stops, we step out into a landscape that holds only still air, the hush of a place that has begun to forget what it is to hold a conversation with anyone other than itself	DEL	
And then, the house emerges from behind a screen of weeds	CON	Inara sees <i>Lembi</i> for the first time in her life.
I recognize it, in the way that one can sometimes briefly recognize, in the faces of the very elderly, all the versions of every age they have ever been	DEL	
From the outside, it is exactly as my grandmother described—there is the window in front of which she and her brother and sister posed for their portraits	DEL	
And now the stories are returning to me: there is the stoop from which my grandmother’s mother would have shouted for her to stop playing in the hemp fields, where my grandmother sometimes liked to sneak on hot days, the smell of the sun on the leaves like something sweet and something dead, all at once	CON	Inara is able to link the things from her imagination to the physical world.
And there is the half of the house where Livija’s father’s elderly cousin would have lived with his wife, a woman said to have lacked the will to contain her chickens, who let them run everywhere, pecking and scratching like a mad herd, sharing their mites, laying, without qualm, in their cousin-chickens’ nests, until no one could say whose eggs were whose or whose chicks were whose	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And so then it would have been behind this wall, on the opposite half of the house, when, one day, in frustration, my grandmother's mother would issue an ultimatum, the repercussions of which would drift far into the future, like a feather from one of the marauding poultry next door snatched up by the wind: <i>Do whatever you have to, buy up their share of the land, promise to care for them to the end of their days, but those people and their chickens have to go</i>	DEL	
And because sixteen and a half hectares of dirt seemed, at the time, a small price to see something other than her back in the night, her husband agreed	DEL	
I study the front door, which still hangs easy in its jamb	DEL	
It feels as if it could have just been slammed shut—maybe on an angry tom, tail switching, stolen milk still wetting his chin, or maybe on a man off to negotiate the exile of his cousin and his chickens from the land	DEL	
And I'm thinking how remarkable it is that the house still appears to hold the shape of its memories, when I begin to register that something is, in fact, off, like a person who tells a passable story, only to repeat the same story a few minutes later, unaware of what he has forgotten, of what is skipping inside him	CON	Inara realizes that the farm has been abandoned.
I skirt the edge of the house, and as I approach its flank, that's when I see what has previously remained hidden: something has gored the roof	DEL	
Slivers of wood, greasy strands of insulation dangle at the edges of the hole like flaps of cartilage	DEL	
Back here, it smells of larvaed water, steaming animal	DEL	
All the while, the family leaves me alone to my discovery	CON	The family does not engage with the house.
They stand at a respectful distance, at the edge of the property, where the last of the unmelted snow has drifted into swells, rock-studded and stubborn, resistant to the thin sun	DEL	
I'm grateful that they didn't try to define the scope of the loss for me	DEL	
And I can feel myself crying before I can register why	DEL	
At first, I think it's because I'm mourning the fact that I've come too late, that I will never step into a real-life version of my grandmother's re-created idyll	DEL	
But then it occurs to me that I am, in fact, crying in the way someone does when she is relieved of a burden	DEL	
What had Ausma said? <i>Your grandmother's stories aren't my stories</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And when she'd first said it, it had made me sad, frightened even, that there would be no way for me to make the pieces of the past fit together in any kind of way that would return it to something whole	CON	Inara realises that the stories will never come true, but is relieved for the removed responsibility.
Each summer when i was a child, my grandparents sent me to the forest to search for a way back to our lost country	CON	Inara used to go to Latvian summer camp.
For two weeks, every year, until I was in my mid-teens, I attended a camp designed to immerse the children and grandchildren of the local Latvian refugees in a living version of the refugees' collective memories of home	DEL	
Conjured from the woods of Washington State, the camp sat on property purchased with pooled funds—a real estate transaction within the local refugee community's reach because the land, while beautiful, abutted a state correctional institute	DEL	
There, in cool stands of evergreen, I dressed in folk costumes and learned traditional folk dances and wove bookmarks by hand in the colors of the Latvian flag, which we raised each morning while solemnly singing the national anthem	CON	The camp attempted to teach the descendants of immigrants Latvian traditions and symbols.
English was prohibited	DEL	
I remember doing a spirited session of aerobics one afternoon—all the instructions yipped in Latvian	DEL	
On this subject, camp rules were strict: each English word uttered meant ten push-ups on the spot, and we all lived in fear of being called out in this way, of ending up facedown in the dirt	DEL	
Occasionally, exceptions were made, such as for the music to which we learned to dance, my hands on a boy's bony cow-hips, our teachers shouting <i>one, two, three, one, two, three</i> , in Latvian, as we twitched a dizzy polka to Abba's <i>Greatest Hits</i>	DEL	
At the end of each day, after the sun had set, we circled the dying campfire, clad in our Nikes and OP shorts and stinking of bug spray, and we clasped hands and swayed and sang a sad, slow folk song begging the wind to carry us back to the shores of Latvia	DEL	
Then we crawled into our beds in dormitories built to look like replicas of the old wooden houses of the countryside, like <i>Lembi</i> , that the refugees had abandoned when they fled	DEL	
The camp's lake held crawfish in its shallows, their shed skins skimming the shore, cracking beneath our curled toes; but also, leeches, which we learned to unlatch from our bodies with the touch of litmatches	DEL	
<i>Inara loves summer camp</i> , my grandmother wrote to the relatives in Latvia, <i>but she says her least favorite thing is swimming</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
On land, there were lessons in how to identify old farm implements, oral histories of the proper mounding of hay, instruction in the selection of wildflowers appropriate to the braided crowns worn by maidens on midsummer's night	CON	The camp focused a lot on country-living and work that is done in a farm.
Our counselors crafted elaborate living reenactments of fairy tales and pagan myths, sending us on rambling quests through the forest, where we would encounter costumed devils and witches who we would then be forced to outwit in feats of cunning and skill, or to dispatch with the properly recited tone poem	DEL	
In this way, year after year, we came to believe the past was a place that would always wait for us	DEL	
We were too young to know that there is a difference between the exile's memory of home, which remains perfectly still, immobile, as if encased in a carapace, and a homeland's memory of itself, which drags itself from the shallows each day, molted, tender, new	DEL	
And now the sun is sagging, snagging on the tips of the pines, making what is left of <i>Lembi</i> appear as if illuminated from within, the fading light finding every breach	DEL	
There's an awful beauty to this moment, arriving, finally, at the scene of one's past, and discovering only ruin	CON	Inara is unsure how to feel at finding <i>Lembi</i> in ruin.
And yet, ruin resists simple affirmation, forces us to place questions over certainties, to surrender what we had imagined had always existed, to ask instead, what if	DEL	
What if: the most accurate resurrection of our histories depends not on their preservation, but on their constant, quiet disassembly	DEL	
What if: we told ourselves that ruin is really a reclaiming, a natural revision of what's always been assumed	DEL	
What if: I had come here sooner	CON	Inara is unsure how to feel at finding <i>Lembi</i> in ruin.
There would have been more for me to see	DEL	
But maybe less for me to find	DEL	
From somewhere behind me, I hear the baby stomp and squeal	DEL	
When I turn to look, she is reaching for something balanced in the crook of a sapling: a nest, abandoned, fraying	DEL	
In ruin, edges vanish, everything touches	DEL	
She is, it occurs to me, the same age I was when I went to live with my grandmother	DEL	

## CHAPTER 5

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
How do you feel? my husband asks me, after that first visit	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Like my DNA is singing, I say	CON	Inara feels close to her Latvian relatives and at home in Latvia.
Do you think a country can be a mother? a friend writes, when she hears I've already booked a return ticket to Latvia, to Gulbene, to what is left of the farm that makes me feel like I can see for once both what has been taken, but also what has been left	DEL	
Can land mother? Can it replace a mother?	DEL	
I knew you'd come back, says Ausma, when she sees me again, for the second time in just a year, but she is crying with such force that it occurs to me she didn't know that I'd come back	CON	Inara is a representative of those who left to those who stayed.
And I think that I might have just learned one of the saddest things I will ever know: that nearly a century of experience can teach you to believe more fervently in the certainty of what will disappear than the possibility of what can be restored	DEL	
But then, that is the way of things when you make your home in a place where loss is inscribed on the landscape, from the trunks of its trees, to the waters in its lakes	GEN	Inara considers that loss has become part of the local DNA.
Like the pine that grows in a pasture at the crossroads that once marked the way to Gulbene's old cemetery, just a short walk from Ausma's house	DEL	
There was a time when people came to this pine on their way to bury their dead	CON	People in Gulbene used to inscribe names and symbols in a pine tree near the cemetery as a tribute to the dead.
It's said that they imagined that the hole that they made would bind their loss to something in this world that endured, and would give their grief a home	DEL	
I will come to learn that Ausma, in fact, stopped here on the day they carried her father's casket to the town cemetery	DEL	
Tongues numb with vodka, the mourners stood at the pine's trunk and drew knives down its bark, a cross for each soul	DEL	
Maybe this is why, all these years later, local people still know the location of the pine, even if no one goes there anymore on burial days, and most people have long ago forgotten that anyone did	CON	People honor the past tradition of tree inscription.
Why they erect a shin-high fence at its base in anticipation of the visitors who will somehow find their way to this pasture, despite a lack of signs or clear directions	DEL	
Up close, the pine is not a particularly compelling specimen on its own	DEL	
It holds its spindly branches at awkward angles and does not possess great height	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
But it is remarkable not for what it possesses, but because of what is gone, the way the living bark still bears the shape of each loss; hundreds of tiny hatch marks	DEL	
Then there's the lake where locals go to stand on the shore and stare at the water's wrinkled surface so that they might catch a glimpse of nothing	DEL	
The lake's bottom is said to be the site of a phantom village that no one can ever see	DEL	
An entire town swallowed up one day, when the lake suddenly arrived, unannounced, to find people already living in what it believed was its appointed place	DEL	
And no one saw the lake's waters rushing in to claim what the lake insisted was rightfully its home—the town's inhabitants too busy celebrating the wedding of two locals, they didn't have time, mid-toast, mid-dance, skirts raised, to register their own drowning	DEL	
And this is one small tale	DEL	
But it is also a version of the larger truth	DEL	
This has always been such an easy place to disappear	DEL	
One day, the neighbors are out in their fields, hitching the draft horse to the plow, or bringing straw to the sow soon to farrow, the next day, there is no sign of them, the farmhouse door thrown open, the cows screaming to be milked	CON	Many people from the Gulbene region were plucked from their homes and exiled.
Maybe it's something to do with the transport trucks carrying people to rail depots	DEL	
Or maybe it is the mounds that appear suddenly deep in the forest, black earth hastily tamped down over moss	CON	To escape exile, some people hid in the forests.
And those who remain—they never say a word, as if they believe to say something is to invite their own deletion, quick as the point of a knife scratching away pine bark	CON	People suffered in silence, they did not dare to speak about the deportations.
Better to stay quiet, pretend you are focused on such things as bedding down the barn stalls, the hushing and rustling of the straw as it falls from your hands producing a sound that you could easily mistake for <i>stillhere</i>	DEL	
Spend any amount of time in Latvia, and you will quickly discover that every family's history is cratered with epochs of loss and displacement, sudden chasms of nothing	CON	In the 20 <sup>th</sup> century, more than a million of Latvians were forced to flee, were forcefully exiled or murdered.
Consider the last century—a random almanac of vanishing:	DEL	
1905 People deported to Siberia following an attempted revolution: <b>3,000</b>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
1915–1917 Latvian conscripts killed fighting for the Russian army in World War I: <b>32,000</b> 1917 Number of Latvian refugees driven to neighboring countries by the fighting of World War I: <b>1,000,000</b> June 1941 Men, women and children deported to Siberia over the course of two days by Soviet order: <b>15,000</b> July–October 1942 Jewish Latvians murdered by German troops—and fellow Latvians: 70,000	DEL	
1941–1944 Jews brought to Latvia during World War II from other European countries to be killed: <b>20,000</b> 1944 Estimated number of Latvians who fled the country at the end of World War II for the West: <b>250,000</b> 1945 Estimated number of civilians killed, unaccounted for by war’s end: 200,000	DEL	
<b>March 1949</b> Latvians deported to Siberia over the span of three days by Soviet order: <b>41,000</b>	DEL	
Today, the disappearing continues, although this time it comes in the form of a one-way ticket booked for England—but really, the final destination could just as easily be Ireland or Germany or Spain or Norway, flight paths traced each year by thousands of men and women who board planes in search of work, and never come back	CON	The disappearing from Latvia continues nowadays, as well.
The country’s population is declining, like a clock running backwards	DEL	
Over the past ten years, 250,000 people have been erased from all official tallies	DEL	
For years, Latvia’s citizens have vanished at a rate of 68 people a day	DEL	
There are no signs of reversal, and on some days, even the government cannot summon the resolve to craft optimistic denials	DEL	
<i>Latvia</i> , pronounced a minister for the Office of Family and Children, <i>is dying out</i>	DEL	
In the countryside, where life is set to the schedule of milking and the local papers are attuned to the slightest fluctuations in the welfare of the potato crops (“Beetles Attack!” read the front page of the local paper one week), the dying looks like this: In June, on solstice, when tradition calls for a bonfire to burn through the night, those still left in the countryside search the horizon for purls of smoke	CON	The countryside of Latvia has been almost completely abandoned due to people emigrating in search of better life.
The old people remember a time when it seemed hundreds of fires blazed in the dark	DEL	
Now, they struggle to spot the faintest smudge of one pyre in the distance, maybe two	DEL	
Used to be they sent people to Siberia, a local dairy farmer will tell me, now they just exile themselves	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The puppy recognizes me as soon as he sees me again, the pads of his paws skritch my collarbone when he jumps and tries to force me into a happy jig	DEL	
Liva, the baby who found the nest, is no longer a baby, but the sister to a baby	DEL	
The big-puppy licks food from the new great-grandchild's face	DEL	
I have come back so that I can be here for the span of a summer, the time of light, hours and hours of an unsetting sun that tricks the heart into thinking that it will never tire or slow	CON	One year, Inara spent the whole summer in Latvia.
What do you want to do while you are here, Ligita, Ausma's youngest daughter, asks as she embraces me again with the kind of enveloping fierceness that is meant to banish all distance in an instant	CON	Her cousins treat Inara warmly.
And I tell her this is the closest I imagine I can ever come to experiencing life as my grandmother might have known it, and so all I want to do with the time that I have here, in Gulbene, with them, is to live, as family lives together	CON	Inara spends the summer experiencing life in the Latvian countryside, working in the garden and foraging in the forest.
So we live	DEL	
We live outside, harvesting tomatoes, snicking weeds from the potato beds, wrenching beetles from the leaves	DEL	
There are trips deep into the forest to forage for wild fruit and mushrooms	DEL	
We emerge with baskets of chanterelles and Latvian huckleberries, our limbs burred with bug bites, dense swarms of mosquitoes that reach us through our clothing, clog each breath	DEL	
I see, for the first time, with Aivars's help, the dimpled tracks of wild boar	DEL	
I harvest strawberries and currants from the garden until the palms of my hands are leathered and red, as if burned by lye	DEL	
At night, in the undark, I follow the smoke to a former cowshed that has been converted into a sauna	DEL	
I take water from a bucket in which birch branches soak and let the drops pearl onto the hot rocks	DEL	
Then, I hit myself with the moistened birch switches until the leaves drift the floor and my skin shines like peeled bark	DEL	
This is how we mark time: First, we cut armfuls of peonies, then dahlias, then gladiolus.	CON	The flow of time is marked according to the nature.
And with each new day, a little more of what had seemed lost finds its way back to me	DEL	
Today we are talking about love	CON	Inara learns about Ausma and Harijs love story.
And a boy	DEL	
No, not a boy—a baby rabbit, Ausma says	DEL	
A baby rabbit hiding in the back row of desks that thicketed her childhood schoolhouse	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
So little, Ausma remembers, quiet, always listening, ears twitching.	DEL	
That was her first impression of her husband, Harijs	DEL	
Was there a romance back then? I ask	DEL	
Not for me, no, but he seemed to think so, she says, and smiles	CON	Harijs was in love with Ausma from afar.
I didn't even know his name	DEL	
This has become our routine, to talk in the mornings about the time before now as Ausma clears the breakfast dishes	DEL, CON	Only in the mornings, Inara is able to ask Ausma about the past.
Ausma offering strands of stories that I gather, one at a time, and I try to find a way to make them hold together in my mind, like my grandmother's scarf, which is up in my room, under my pillow	DEL	
I thought no one would marry me; I was in Siberia during the years all my friends married, Ausma says	GEN	Ausma spent her youth in Siberia.
I don't stop her to ask more about Siberia, although I want to	DEL	
Something tells me to go slowly	CON	Inara realizes that she must be careful when asking about the past.
And then, says Ausma, after we were allowed to come back, and I was working at the chicken farm, he came over to help my brother, and he saw me sawing something	CON	Ausma and Harijs reconnected after she returned from Siberia.
He said he was so impressed by how hard I worked	DEL	
Well, I had some experience cutting wood back in Siberia, I said	DEL	
I know, he said	DEL	
And I said, how did you know that? And he said because we went to school together	DEL	
I said, we went to school together? How did you remember me? Later, he told me he'd always thought of me, that he was quiet when we were younger because he was paying attention, memorizing things about me, but he was too young then to dare to do what he wanted to do now	DEL	
And that was to tell me that he didn't want to let me slip away again	DEL	
So he waited for you all those years? I ask	DEL	
He waited, she says, and smiles, then pinches Harijs's arm just beneath his T-shirt	DEL	
I waited, he says	DEL	
They held their wedding party here, at the house they still live in, in the garden	DEL	
We can see the spot from the kitchen window	DEL	
Do you know, I built this house, Harijs tells me	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
With my own hands! And then I wished for the perfect bride to always keep me company in this house, and she appeared! They filled the fields with music from a record player they planted in the grass beneath a canopy of lilac trees, and everyone danced, while my great- grandmother sat bundled on a bench, happily summoning mittens from skeins of wool, soft as a baby rabbit's pelt	DEL	
I knew there were people whispering, that I was old to marry, that we would be lucky to have children, Ausma says	DEL	
<i>Ha!</i> And I had three	DEL	
Now we have grandchildren, even great-grandchildren	DEL	
She is my love, Harijs says	CON	Ausma and Harijs are happily married.
And I am struck by not just the sweet simple clarity of his declaration, but also its construction: Here in this little house that Harijs built by hand for his love, she is, he is, we are	DEL	
It is a sweet simple life, focused on the present	ZERO	Ausma and Harijs's life in the countryside is simple and focused on the present.
The next meal is what we can gather from the garden	DEL	
There is no indoor shower, only a sauna and a privy	DEL	
Always, with breakfast, lunch or dinner, there is dessert: stewed fruit, whipped semolina with fresh cream or maybe the extravagance of candy plucked from the village supermarket's penny bins	CON	Life in the countryside is structured and follows a routine.
And always, in the afternoon, <i>quiet hour</i>	DEL	
Rest, Inara, rest, Ausma will insist, don't read, don't talk, just rest	DEL	
Then, when we rise, more work until we can't work anymore: raking, mowing, baking, butchering the hank of wild boar that Aivars has dropped by	DEL	
It looks like it will rain this afternoon, Ausma says, eyeing the sky, her cleaver momentarily suspended over a bloody swine hock	DEL	
We'd better pick the last of the peas	DEL	
One day, during quiet hour, I take Ausma's photo album to the room with me	DEL	
And I notice that in pages toward the back, the old photographs begin to give way to more recent ones, including photographs of our family my grandmother must have sent from the States after the sisters were once again able to reestablish contact	CON	Inara looks through the photoalbum and finds that Ausma has ordered her and her sister's family photos as if in a conversation

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Ausma has laid out her sister's photographs so that they are engaged in a kind of conversation with her own: here are pictures of Ausma's children on one side of the page, Livija's on the other; their Christmas, our Christmas; Ausma posing in front of a horse, my grandmother posing in front of my grandfather's Chrysler K car; here is Ausma, helping to carry a casket, covered in pine boughs, here is my grandmother casting a handful of dirt on my grandfather's grave	DEL	
And then I notice that one of the photos has come loose and fluttered to the floor	DEL	
When I go to retrieve it, I can see my grandmother has penciled a brief description on the back: Emils took this picture just as Juris was sneezing	CON	Inara finds short descriptions of the photos on the back sides.
I check all the other photos of our family, and each one is the same: a brief vignette of nothing	DEL	
Here we are at Crater Lake	DEL	
Maruta so wanted to go home, but we were 400 miles away	DEL	
My dahlias	DEL	
It has been raining and I have had a hard time keeping up with the weeds	DEL	
Look how scraggly	DEL	
Baby Inara with my little dog Polly	DEL	
Polly attacked the vacuum cleaner because it got too close to Inara!	DEL	
For a long time afterward, I think of my grandmother's captions, how hard she tried with each one to convey the kind of intimacy that distance steals from the separated, the seemingly unremarkable moments of everyday lives	CON	The descriptions on the backsides of the photos were a way to bring those who are away closer.
It is what I think about when Ausma and I are debating which sweet we should have with our lunch: stewed gooseberries with whipped cream? (Maybe that's better with breakfast, Ausma decides)	CON	Inara thinks that the most important parts of life are the everyday little happenings.
It is what I think about when we roam the house, hunting flies (Ausma keeping count: 21! Swatter whizzing, 22!)	DEL	
When we practice English ( <i>Dead, fly</i> )	DEL	
When we watch the nightly national news and both swear we are not tired, and then fall asleep sitting up during the segments on vandalized red-light cameras outside Riga or preparations for the next national song festival, Ausma with her latest favorite kitten from the barn curled up high on her chest, like a fur stole	DEL	
Or when, together, we clean the family cemetery plot, dragging rags down the headstone of my great-uncle, my great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents, and Ausma digs in her big black purse for a hand trowel she has stashed there, so that she can slice a seam in the ground where begonias can bloom	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
It is what I think of when Ausma and I are sitting next to each other sipping tea, reading the local paper, which features regular updates on the number of tick-infected currently bedded at the local hospital, the level of potato beetle threat, as well as an astrological chart in every issue that notes the tasks best suited to the moon's present phase	DEL	
A good day for planting annuals, reads Ausma, and manicures, and beating the rugs	DEL	
Then she turns to the jokes	DEL	
Always there are jokes on the paper's back page, usually about husbands and wives	DEL	
We have taken to reading them aloud to each other in the mornings	DEL	
A way to summon some light before we begin to journey into the territory of forgotten things, unspoken things, lost things	DEL	
Wife to husband reading the paper: You can stop saying, <i>Uh-huh, uh-huh, yea, yea, uh-uh</i> , I ended my conversation with you ten minutes ago	DEL	
I move through each day a collector now of the smallest of facts, a kind of dossier of the inconsequential, proof that I have spent long enough in Ausma's presence to have absorbed the most mundane, yet deeply human details: She cannot sleep before it's dark	GEN	Inara observes Ausma to get to know her better.
She takes two spoons of sugar in her tea	DEL	
She prefers the radio station that plays nothing but Latvian-language pop songs, accordion-drunk polkas and hand-to-heart ballads that whisper to her in the background, a running narrative that alternates between documenting <i>a love like summer flowers, a love like apple blossoms</i> , and <i>women, women, oh, women who crush men's hearts, and never feel a moment's sorrow</i>	DEL	
At night, she places her teeth in a juice glass on a shelf above the kitchen sink, the same shelf where she keeps her only comb, and her favorite paring knife	DEL	
She has a special fondness for cats <i>that hold their tails like dogs</i>	DEL	
Her favorite tree is a birch tree that grows about a hundred meters from the house, its branches reaching low enough to rake the ground	DEL	
She made a point of showing me the tree on the first day I came back to her	DEL	
The tree is at least sixty years old, planted just after the war's end	DEL	
She lifted the branches so that we could slip past them, and we stood for a few minutes, hidden together behind the screen of leaves	DEL	
She put her palm against the burlled and scarred trunk: <i>Look how beautifully it has grown old</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
No matter how early i try to rise, Ausma is always up before me	CON	Ausma always wakes up first.
Would you like new potatoes for lunch? Ausma asks	DEL	
Boiled or fried? And with milk, or butter, or both? Do you know how many times I should have died? Harijs asks	DEL	
Eight times! It doesn't matter that he has already told me; this has become like a game between us— if I don't listen, as if for the first time, he cannot be resurrected— and so over breakfast he proceeds to remind me, and himself, of all the ways he is unbreakable	CON	Harijs likes to share his stories of near-death experiences, emphasizing that he has always survived.
The Russian soldiers he hid from in the forest when he was a boy; the mortar, years later, that went off just as far away as you are to me, and only left his ears ringing; the horse that he was riding that fell through the ice, with him still upon its back; the portion of a bridge he was helping to build that buckled and crushed his spine; the wheel of the combine that rolled over his chest, splintering ribs; the roof he tumbled from, last year, at eighty-four, snapping only a bone in his foot	DEL	
It is not so much a catalog of near-death, or a manifesto against disappearing, I decide, as a daily declaration of living: that against all odds, he is still here	DEL	
I am a cat! he says	DEL	
Go work, cat, Ausma says, flicking a dish towel in his direction, but she is smiling	DEL	
The dogs need food and there's hay to get	DEL	
I have learned to wait for this moment, the table half-cleared, tea still left in her cup, and Harijs clomped-off outside	CON	Inara and Ausma talk about the past in the mornings before the start of the day.
This is when she will allow the past to enter our present space	DEL	
She will tolerate my questions, sometimes even begin to share memories before I ask	DEL	
But we have an unspoken understanding that I am to let her tell the stories in any order she chooses, and when she sets down the dish towel and says, And now to work, turning her face so I can't see her tears, that means it is time to stop, that she has offered all she can for today and now she needs time to recover	CON	Talking about the past is emotionally very taxing for Ausma and she cannot speak for long.
And then she will head to the pasture where they keep their horse, ancient, swaybacked, bristle-chinned, but still sure-footed and true when it's time to plow their vegetable fields	CON	Ausma and Harijs have a horse
Behind her she drags a sledgehammer, which she uses to reposition the stake that tethers the horse to the land	DEL	
She checks to see if he has bitten down all the grass the length of his rope will allow him to reach, then she shifts him to a new grazing spot	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
After that, it will be to the shed where the chickens roost, to collect the day's eggs from the dark corner scrimmed with cobwebs that the hens seem to prefer	GEN, DEL	Ausma and Harijs have chickens.
And from there, to the currant bushes to fill a pail	DEL	
Or to the edge of the garden, to snip the withered heads from the last of the calendulas	DEL	
Time for my show, she will say when she finally comes back inside, preempting any more possible talk between us	CON	Ausma has a daily routine of watching soap operas on TV.
She has a particular fondness for Russian and Brazilian soap operas that have been dubbed in Latvian, and if I come and sit next to her in the darkened room where she keeps the old blinkering television, she will whisper the backstory to me over the action, so that I can follow along	DEL	
This woman thought she was an orphan, but really she was the daughter of a wealthy woman who gave her up for adoption many years ago, and when the wealthy woman's other daughter found out, she tried to have her half sister killed, but she only blinded her, and now, without her sight, she fell down some steps and dropped her baby, and it rolled into a garbage container where she couldn't find it, and then later some strangers heard the baby crying and thought it had been abandoned, and they couldn't have children of their own, so they took it, and now that woman is searching for her baby, trying to get it back	DEL	
Ausma watches, shaking her head	DEL	
How much more can a person suffer, she says	DEL	
She does not phrase it as a question	DEL	
Once, I thought I might see if I could take us back to the time before the present as we worked outside in the dirt	CON	Once, Inara tried to initiate a conversation about Siberia.
Do any of these flowers also grow in Siberia? I asked	DEL	
For a long time, the only sound was of Ausma's spade, biting into soil, then spitting it back out	DEL	
I spent so many years trying to forget what happened in the past, she said finally	CON	Because of the trauma, Ausma has always wanted to forget the past.
That's the only way I could keep going forward, by never returning again, not even in my memories	DEL	
We dug on in silence	DEL	
What I did not see then that I can see now: that there are many ways to make a declaration, without ever uttering a word	DEL	
The weight of cherries falling in a pail, the milky heat of a kitten's breath, the dusted outline of the gelding's ribs as it huffs happily into its hay, the sound of Harijs whistling from the barn as he repairs the horse's tack—this sweet simple life, focused on the present, this was Ausma's way of saying, <i>Here is how I have survived</i>	DEL	
<i>Here is how I live—so that I am able to live</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
I still don't know what it says about me that even after this became clear, I kept asking Ausma to go back into the time before the present	CON	Even though it was difficult for Ausma, Inara still wanted to find out about the past.
That she kept going back into the time before the present says everything about her love for me	DEL	
And Harijs's repeated recitations of calamity, always in the moments leading up to my morning conversation with Ausma	DEL	
I have come to suspect that I misunderstood completely what he intended with that ritual	DEL	
That maybe all along, what he had been trying to do, over and over again, with all the life that remained in him, was to offer me his trauma, so that he might spare his love from talking about hers	CON	Harijs is a loving husband.

## CHAPTER 6

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
It was march, the month when vipers sometimes rained from the sky, dropped onto unsuspecting heads by storks, clumsy-beaked, languorous-winged, scaly legs dragging through the low clouds	DEL	
If it were possible for us to rise up high enough to join them on their lazed glide across the land, to look down upon it from their point of view, this is what we might have seen on that day, at the beginning of the spring that would mark the end of her former life	DEL	
Below us, the fields, stubbled and brooding, like a man slowly lifting his head from the table to see so many empty bottles	DEL	
And now the roof of the schoolhouse that had been raised from red stone, and where, inside, some children were still forgetting at the top of their school compositions to record the date as 1949, not 1948	DEL	
There, perhaps a dog, sitting at the edge of a driveway, one hind leg hoisted toward the sky to make room for its rooting snout, guard to what once would have been called a house, but was now nothing more than the hollowed-out testimony of a mistimed machine-gun strafing	DEL	
On that day, five years before, a Russian plane had swooped low, aiming for the German troops retreating on the nearby road, but all that fell in the plane's wake was a horse, a woman and, finally, the old farmhouse, where the woman had planned to give birth to the child who died with her	DEL	
But now, this day, upon that same road: a girl	DEL	
Boots stamping mud, in one version of her memories	DEL	
Bicycle wheels churning beneath her, in another	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Either way: sent off that morning by her mother, pinch-browed, dim-eyed, drained by the effort of trying to still the worry humming inside her, like a wasp trapped between windowpanes: <i>Why don't you go to town, child, bring this fabric to the seamstress and let her measure you for a dress</i>	CON	Ausma's mother tried to protect her from being picked up by the soldiers by having her go to the town.
She took what her mother pressed on her, said nothing	DEL	
She knew what her mother really meant: that maybe in town, she might hear some news about her brother	CON	Ausma's brother had already been taken by the soldiers.
He had driven off from their farm a day before to see about a gelding	DEL	
It was long past the time he should have been back	DEL	
And so Ausma went, out the door of the farmhouse, past the sign into which its name was carved, <i>Lembi</i> , and headed in the direction of the sun	DEL	
On a good day, the walk to town took two hours, a chance to catalog the things that had returned with winter's ouster, the first new thrusts of grass, as pale and awkward as colts' legs; the skitter of birds' claws on green wood, and then, maybe, the high peeling bawls of a kinglet, or the dizzy, gulping chants of a warbler— whoever had ridden the winds back north first	DEL	
A truck passed, trailing a spray of mud, but otherwise it seemed as if she had the road to herself	DEL	
What she could not see: her family's farmhouse, some distance behind her already, and the truck rolling to a stop in front	CON	Soldiers went to <i>Lembi</i> to round up the family for exile.
And off in the distance ahead of her: the village, with its houses and churches and businesses, the distillery, the abattoir, the candy factory that made caramels wrapped with portraits of voluptuous cows, hock-deep in clover	DEL	
And just beyond all that: the town's railroad tracks, where, for the last twenty-four hours, cattle cars had been coupled and locked into place, one after another, until they formed a great snaking line, so long that it did not end, just dissolved into the horizon	CON	On the tracks, cattle cars were prepared to take people to Siberia.
And on either side of the tracks, piles of boards, those that were not needed by the men who, while the rest of the village slept, had hammered them against the car walls to form crude bunk beds and over the windows so that no one could see, the sound of the driving nails like the churring of so many nightjars	DEL	
The town revealed to her nothing of this, and later, upon reflection, everything	DEL	
It was the tiniest of tells: her hand raised in greeting to a man she thought she knew; the man dropping his head, so she saw only his hat	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
At the time she told herself maybe she'd confused him for someone else	DEL	
Not a sign of her brother anywhere	DEL	
In the seamstress's shop: the sound of needles punching through fabric, steady and methodical	DEL	
And then all that was left was to go back home	DEL	
At first, she couldn't understand what she was seeing as she approached the farmhouse: the front door, extended wide like the mouth of a yawning cat	CON	Ausma returned to her house and found her family had disappeared.
Then she felt the shards of broken crockery snapping underfoot	CON	The house had been abruptly abandoned.

## CHAPTER 7

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
We have no songs to reach my grandmother, Livija, only the lilt and drift of Ausma's memories of her sister, which I collect, and then pocket, like they are so many perfect stones	DEL	
I ask: What was she like when she when she was younger? And Ausma answers: Well, you have to remember, she was fourteen when I was born	DEL	
To me she was very glamorous, always perfectly dressed, always looking in the mirror	CON	Ausma admired Livija.
She had many boys who liked her, before your grandfather, but one who was very special	DEL	
She kept his letters in her room, and I snuck them out once, intending to read them, but after just a few sentences, I felt ashamed for taking them	DEL	
They were too private, words no one else but the two of them should know	DEL	
I used to get all her cast-off clothes, which were beautiful, because she was, but I didn't like that I never got anything new	DEL	
I do remember she had a big black coat, with a ruff of fur at the throat	DEL	
She wore it when I went to visit her in Riga once, before the war	DEL	
At the time, I dreamed of being grown-up enough one day to wear that coat, too	DEL	
<i>Ha!</i> That seems so funny to me now	DEL	
And a hat with a feather that swooped like this	DEL	
I nod	DEL	
She somehow managed to look elegant just going to the supermarket, or hanging laundry, I say	DEL	
Livija did everything just so, says Ausma	DEL	
Her stitches were always straight	DEL	
Her dough, always soft and light, like so many feathers! I looked up to her	DEL	
Our mother was sick a lot of the time, especially after I was born, so Livija raised me, really—a surrogate mother	CON	Livija cared for Ausma as her mother.
Like she raised you	DEL	
She was the one who braided my hair	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She was the one who fed me	DEL	
She was the one who taught me how to knit and how to read, before I even started school	DEL	
But oh, she was a demanding teacher	DEL	
She made me sit and work for hours	DEL	
Stop fidgeting, she would say, practice your letters!	DEL	
How old were you when you last saw her, before she went away? I ask	DEL	
Let's see, says Ausma, it was the last time she came to visit the farm	DEL	
She had just married your grandfather and they had just had their first baby	DEL	
I was fourteen, I think	ZERO	Ausma saw Livija for the last time when she was 14.
Yes, that's right	DEL	
I was fourteen	DEL	
Maybe I was fifteen	DEL	
But no older	DEL	
Oh, how I missed her all the way in Riga	ZERO	Ausma missed Livija after Livija moved to Riga.
And then the phones stopped working	DEL	
And then the trains	DEL	
And then she was gone	DEL	
When did you hear from her again?	CON	
Not until we had come back from Siberia	CON	The sisters reestablished contact only many years later.
By then, she was in America	CON	
So neither of you knew what happened to the other after the war?	DEL	
No, Ausma says	DEL	
Not even during the war	CON	The sisters were clueless about each other's fate.
She was in Riga	DEL	
We were here	DEL	
Hiding in the forest with the cows as the planes dropped bombs	DEL	
What we each lived through, we lived through alone	DEL	
Without the other ever feeling along	DEL	
<i>I feel along with you</i> , the Latvians say, when they want to express genuine understanding, compassion, even sympathy toward one another	CON	Inara is fascinated by the implied action in the word for sympathy in Latvian.
It's interesting to me the way the construction of the phrase implies action, movement	CON	
As if any true act of empathy demands not only emotional projection but also physical accompaniment, a willingness to travel with the other, deep into the unknown of wherever it is they must go	DEL	
Please, Ausma said, take me, too	CON	
She said it standing on the platform, crying and arguing with the soldiers who stood guard over the row of boxcars that stretched down the tracks	CON	Ausma found her family to be in one of the cattle cars ready to be sent away.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Through the gaps she could see eyes blinking, hands snatching at the air	DEL	
Letters dropped to the tracks, and the people in the boxcars yelled to those who stood outside: Please pick up my note and bring it to my relatives, let them know where I am	DEL	
Upon discovering the ransacked farmhouse, Ausma had run to her father's cousin's farm	CON	Some families were not targeted by the soldiers and were allowed to stay.
Your mother and brother are at the train station, her cousin's husband told her, and he took her there, led her to the car that held them	DEL	
Her mother cried and reached to her through the opening	DEL	
I'm glad you're safe, she said, and Ausma realized that her mother must have suspected something, sent her away on an errand to the seamstress on purpose, so she was not at home when the soldiers arrived	DEL	
Ausma cupped water in her hands, brought what she could to her mother's and brother's mouths	DEL	
They told her they had heard the railcars were scheduled to depart the next morning, and although no one would tell them where they were headed, everyone knew, because it was not the first time	DEL	
What will you do? they asked her	DEL	
She didn't know what to say	DEL	
That night, at her cousin's, she tried to think	DEL	
They let her cry for her family, and then they told her to be practical	DEL	
You can't do anything for them now, best to save yourself, you are young, you still have a chance	DEL	
That's how you can help them now: by making sure someone lives	CON	People considered that exile means death and did not expect people to come back.
That's what she would remember, years later: <i>Make sure someone lives</i>	DEL	
She didn't sleep, and left in the morning before the sun	DEL	
She would need supplies for the journey ahead, and she hoped to make it back to the farmhouse before a new wave of looters arrived	CON	Ausma gathered some items from the farm that could help the family survive.
A woolen blanket, a small hatchet, a honey tin	DEL	
That was all the house had left to give her	DEL	
They tried to turn her away at the train station	DEL	
The soldiers told her she was a stupid girl	DEL	
Go home, they said	DEL	
They could not understand what she was trying to do	DEL	
Who volunteered for their own exile? But she begged, and she pleaded— <i>take me too</i> —and finally they agreed to unlock the door of the railcar where her mother and brother were held	CON	Ausma chose to go into exile with her family.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Ausma stepped into the dark	DEL	
It's me, she said, because they couldn't see who it was at first	DEL	
I'm coming with you	DEL	
You're here? My girl is here? her mother cried	DEL	
Oh, what are you doing, she said, her voice caught somewhere between relief and grief, what are you doing	DEL	
And now I come intruding from the present to ask how old she was when she gave herself up	DEL	
She says, I was sixteen	DEL	
But later, as I am running through the dates, I realize that this cannot be right, that she would have been twenty-one when she stood on the railway platform and asked to be sent with her family to Siberia	DEL	
I mention this to Ausma	DEL	
She looks at me for a long time	DEL	
I was sixteen when my life ended, she says again	DEL	Ausma considered that her life ended when she was 16.
I try once more: But that's before Siberia	DEL	
Yes, she says	DEL	
But that's why it wasn't so hard for me to go	CON	Because of some traumatic event 5 years prior, it was easier for Ausma to choose to go to Siberia.
I felt like my life was already over	DEL	
At sixteen? She nods	DEL	
What happened when you were sixteen? She doesn't answer	DEL	
Ausma?	DEL	

## CHAPTER 8

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The Latvians have always named their farms, as if they were living things, and it is a name that tends to remain—still printed on all official maps, like the one I am holding now, unfurled on the backseat, pinned against the wind roaring in through the open windows with my fingertips—long after all other evidence of that farm has disappeared	DEL	Latvians name their farms as if they were living things.
Whether out of respect or neglect or superstition or maybe all three, when a farmhouse is abandoned in the countryside, it is never torn down	DEL	When a farmhouse is abandoned, it is never demolished, it is left as it is.
It's left just as it was the moment the last person pulled the door closed	DEL	
And in this way it will sit—as rain tongues plaster from the walls, as the weight of the winter snow snaps ceiling joists—waiting for someone to return	DEL	
Sometimes, though, this waiting goes on for so long that the farm can no longer remember what it once was	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Like a drunk counting backwards, it is unable to retrace the exact order of its unmaking	DEL	
And yet, maybe that is not such a bad thing	DEL	
Ausma is the one who finally suggests that we visit together	CON	Ausma suggests taking Inara to see <i>Lembi</i> again.
We've been circling the subject for weeks, and I have been hesitant to push her	DEL	
I have been eager to visit whatever remains, to register the progress of the farm's decay over the past year, but it's too far to walk on my own	DEL	
I haven't been back to Lembi for so long, Ausma says, her belly to the sink, using the blunt side of a knife to scrape the skins off potatoes that she's just spaded from the soil	DEL	
I don't want to see it anymore	CON	Ausma herself is not eager to visit <i>Lembi</i> .
There's nothing there, anyway	DEL	
Why would you want to go there?	DEL	
It seemed like the happiest place my grandmother had ever known, I say	DEL	
She talked about it with me so much, it seemed like she wanted me to know it, the way she knew it	DEL	
Ausma studies me	DEL	
The farm was a very different place for my sister, she says	DEL	
She could enjoy her youth there	CON	
And you? I ask	DEL	
It took my childhood, she says	CON	Ausma has rather negative feelings towards <i>Lembi</i> as opposed to what Livija felt and Inara feels.
Then, suddenly, one morning, over tea and tomatoes and pickled herring, Ausma announces that this would be the perfect day to take a drive	CON	Ausma and Harijs take Inara to <i>Lembi</i> .
The hay can wait, she says to Harijs, who has spent the last week winching half-ton rolls of hay into the loft of the old cowshed, get the car	DEL	
With Harijs at the wheel, we lurch onto the main road, past Ausma's old horse rubbing against the bark of an oak tree, past the storks, trailing a few steps behind the harvesting tractors, beaks open for prey scattered by the blades	DEL	
I move to put my seat belt on and Ausma laughs	DEL	
There's no point out here, she says, and it's not clear whether she means that the gesture is unnecessary, or that it's futile	DEL	
I let go of the strap	DEL	
Soon it is only dirt beneath the tires	DEL	
Ausma names the abandoned farms we pass	ZERO	
That belonged to my godfather, she says, he disappeared in the war, no body, we never knew what happened to him	CON	Many farms were abandoned during the war.
There—our neighbors	DEL	
Dead	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
As she speaks, stands of birch and ash and aspen rise and repeat, a white noise that drowns out all other landmarks, yet somehow Ausma can still sense when we have crossed the old property line	CON	In her heart, Ausma still feels <i>Lembi</i> .
This is where Lembi starts, she announces over the droning of the trees, right here	DEL	
Right here, the baron's secretary said, sign here	CON	
And my great-great-grandfather, who never learned to write his own name, drew three "X"s	CON	
It is the eighth of January 1882, and with those quill strokes Andrejs Smits is the first of his family to own the land where his ancestors before him have lived and worked and died	CON, DEL	In 1882, Inara's great-great-grandfather Andrejs Smits became the rightful owner of the land under the farm.
Their home has always belonged to someone else	DEL	
Going all the way back to the days of mud and sticks and squatting forms huddled in marshes, honing bone with sharpened stones, the region's inhabitants have only ever really held the briefest of claims to the ground that they lived upon, or had a say in what it is called, or how it will appear on any maps	CON	The land in the Gulbene region, as did Latvia, often changed owners and ruling powers.
Babies here might be born under the flag of one nation, but by the time they draw their next breath, another flag is already being unfurled	CON	Sometimes, the change of ruling power was rapid.
<i>Where do you come from?</i> Always, there are two possible answers: I come from_[insert name of country today] or: I come from here	DEL	
<i>Here</i> —meaning the grass and stones beneath a person's feet, the ground upon which they are raised	CON	Latvians found it easier to tie their belonging to land not the political rulers.
Because that will never change, regardless of who happens to be ruling at any particular moment	DEL	
<i>Here</i> pins each person to something solid against which they can always reference themselves, no matter how weird or confusing things get, the way a drunk puts his toes on the floor beside the bed to try to stop the swirls	DEL	
But there is no concept of the Latvians as a people, except in relation to what they can do for others, because there is no concept of Latvia as a country, except in relation to what it can provide to others	DEL	
To be born in the territories now known as Latvia prior to the twentieth century is to more than likely be born a serf, bound under hereditary contract to provide a lifetime of labor to the wealthy friends of whatever empire happens to be ruling at the time	CON	Latvian ancestors were serfs, working in manor farms for whoever was in power.
In the three or so centuries leading up to my great-great-grandfather's purchase, the countryside is largely under the possession of titled Germans, some of them descendants of the Brothers of the Sword who helped the Catholic Church tame the region's pagan tribes	CON	Most of the time, the country was ruled by Germans.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They have last names like von Wolf or von Hen, sons and daughters of men named Johan Gottlieb II or Heinrich Johan I—friends, counsel and cousins to the tsars	DEL	
They refer to the Latvians as a whole as <i>not-German</i>	ZERO	They refer to the Latvians as a whole as <i>not-German</i> .
Alongside the Latvians’ crops, they raise neo-Gothic manors and neo-Romanesque manors, baroque manors, manors with Corinthian columns that support carved pediments of birds and flowers and family crests through which they usher their opera- singer brides, their Italian-novelist lovers	CON	The wealthy Germans lived in fancy and large manors and lead a lavish lifestyle.
They build stables and riding arenas and wine cellars and plant shrubs in the shape of their spouses’ initials, pour concrete for platforms upon which they may enjoy afternoon tea as they look out over their lands	DEL	
There is no limit to their wealth, but, out here in the countryside, they discover there is a limit to their knowledge	DEL	
They do not know how to handle rye seed, how to lay by hand the stone foundations of a livestock barn	DEL	
They cannot gauge by the change in the light when it is time to head to the fields with the scythes, have never burned the bedding and clothing of the dead and then turned the warm ashes back into the soil	DEL	
For the care and cultivation of those things that exist beyond the baron’s understanding, he turns to his serfs—like the family of my great-great-grandfather—happy to prosper from their knowledge, even if he is not certain it qualifies as a form of intelligence	DEL	
Or maybe you have found a girl and you are ready to exchange wedding rings—iron bands fashioned from blacksmiths’ scraps—but before you and your bride can say it for yourselves, the baron must first say yes	CON	Local barons made all decisions in the lives of the Latvian serfs.
The grandmothers say that if you slap the jamb of the door on your way in, it might ensure that the baron’s resistance lasts only as long as the sound of your palm against the wood	DEL	
What they mean: Go ahead and ask	DEL	
But you can’t expect to hold any more sway than a simple knock of flesh against wood	DEL	
Those same grandmothers will also tell you: A stone often lifted never becomes green	DEL	
What they mean: Don’t hope too much	DEL	
Best to accept your situation, endure	CON	Latvians learned to be content with their situation.
This is what qualifies among the serfs as happy talk	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
About fifty years before my great-great-grandfather's birth, a book circulates among the landed class, a chronicle of Latvian peasant life written by the son of a rural minister who hopes that his grim, unblinking account of serf existence will guilt landowners into repentance and reform	CON	Garlieb Merkel's book 'The Latvians' describes the lives, traditions and beliefs of serf Latvians becoming a guidebook on the Latvian character.
A Latvian reacts to the suffering and death of his children or his closest relatives with an unsettling blank calm	CON	
No one has ever shown him any empathy, and so he cannot summon it when it comes to others	DEL	
Given the crushing grip of his everyday wants, all ties, even those between blood relatives, are as fragile as a spider's web	DEL	
In their lives, we see the effects of constant, sustained cruelty	DEL	
Soon it is all anyone is reading	DEL	
If there happened to be a smallpox outbreak, mothers would take their unweaned infants to the homes of the infected, so that the baby would catch the disease	DEL	
Or the mother would smear pus from the smallpox on bread with butter and feed it to her children	DEL	
When challenged, the mother simply replies, "Better for the child to die now, if he is going to die than to eat all our bread and then die"	DEL	
Even as the barons publicly denounce the book as little more than incendiary propaganda to stoke sympathy for the serfs, even as they engineer the expulsion of its writer from Latvia, many still keep copies of <i>The Latvians</i> on their library shelves for those times when they require a reference to the more confounding aspects of their workers' psychologies	DEL	
And so long before my great-great-grandfather is conceived, he is already created, the fundamental elements of his character loosed in the fanning of these pages, thousands of gloved fingers tracing the black and white lines that will split, then replicate, the raw code of his inheritance:	CON	
<i>The strangest unfortunates</i>	DEL	
<i>Eternally changeable</i>	DEL	
<i>Semiliterate folk</i>	DEL	
<i>yet one of the richest spoken languages in terms of perceptive and picturesque words</i>	DEL	
<i>Primitive</i>	DEL	
<i>Born to be domestic beasts</i>	CON	Latvians were considered to be made for physical work in the farm.
<i>Superstitious</i>	ZERO	
Through the blood and mucus, my great-great-grandfather takes his first gasp of air, mouth working like one of the carps rising to the surface of the manor's moat	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He is technically the first in his family to breathe freely—while he has been floating in his mother’s belly, the barons, under mounting calls for reform, have torn up all the peasants’ hereditary obligations, effectively emancipating all serfs—and yet my great-great-grandfather is born as much under the control of the barons as his ancestors ever were	CON	When Andrejs Smits is born, serfdom has been abolished.
Because while the barons’ gesture has saved the serfs from a lifetime of required service, it has also effectively separated the serf from his farm	CON	But the abolishing of serfdom has separated the people from the land.
Under the old system, serfs might be a baron’s property and receive no real pay, but in return, it was understood that the serf would live upon the land where he had always lived	DEL	
He could count on baron’s equipment and his support in order to do that, because while the arrangement allowed the serfs to keep a little back for themselves, enough to survive, it was in the baron’s interest, too, because he stood to gain from whatever extra they might grow	DEL	
Now all land belongs exclusively to the barons, and the barons are free to choose who will be the land’s tenants going forward	DEL	
They can charge rent—and set the terms as high as they like	DEL	
They are under no obligation to give anyone the chance to stay	DEL	
So this is what freedom brings: a surname, but little else	CON	After serfdom was abolished, the peasants could choose or were given last names.
Maybe your last name is assigned by the baron, his final attempt to leave a mark on what was his property	CON	
Or maybe it is written down by one of the parish scribes, sent from farmhouse to farmhouse to try to create a census of the newly emancipated, so that they can be taxed, their sons conscripted	DEL	
Hovering at the threshold of all those darkened rooms, eyes burning with wood smoke, the smell of cow, dirt trapped beneath hooves, drying herbs: <i>And what will you call yourself now?</i> Think	DEL	
Little stone, plowman, birch grove, sparrow, swell of earth	DEL	
If you take too long, and he is tired, the scribe might just assign you something, anything, gleaned from a single wincing glimpse into the darkness: Keg drainer, earthworm, dog head, lady bits	DEL	
Or perhaps, if he has exhausted all other possibilities, and can think of nothing else: Schmid, German for Smith, which when written with the Latvian alphabet is Smits	GEN	Inara’s great-great-grandfather was given the last name <i>Smits</i> .
This will be the name my great-great-grandfather carries forward for us, a name he can say but cannot write	GEN	As a peasant, Inara’s great-great-grandfather was illiterate.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Neutral, impassive, name as placeholder, worn into the coming hunger years, the years of revolt and flight	DEL	
No one is required to work for the barons anymore, but then again, no one is allowed to move beyond the boundaries of the parish where they were born, so that the barons don't lose their workforce	GEN	The peasants are not allowed to leave their parishes.
The land that once kept them now traps them	DEL	
Many find themselves right back at the barons' estates, begging for work as paid laborers	DEL	
But they find that what little they make does not support them as well as the food that came from the ground they were allowed to live upon as serfs	CON	Free from serfdom, the peasants struggle to survive as barons charge them for everything.
Even those who manage to come to terms with the barons, who are renting back farmland from them, are discovering how this new life can bring just as much suffering as serfdom ever did, with no one to help them with equipment—unless they rent it from the barons, and fall further into debt, no one to underwrite the crops, no one to absorb the cost of seeds that fail, animals that falter, rain that doesn't come	DEL	
They are starving	DEL	
My great-great-grandfather among them	DEL	
He digs in, trying to learn how to live under the new terms, fields that go unsown without the baron's patronage, except for the ribs and the pinbones of downed milk cattle, weeds growing through desiccated hides	DEL	
So when the decision finally comes to grant peasants the freedom to move beyond their parish, thousands go as far as they are able, off to the capital, weary of practicing flight only in their imaginations—the first subjects in what will prove to be a long-term test: what becomes of the former serf when he is separated from his countryside	DEL	
But still more decide not to go anywhere at all, as if watching all this leave-taking has made them that much more determined to try to stay, even when staying seems impossible	DEL	
This is what my great-great-grandfather chooses	CON	Inara's great-great-grandfather fights to survive in the land and does not leave.
To remain a stone never lifted	DEL	
He waits	DEL	
And he waits	DEL	
Quietly, in one place	DEL	
A wife comes to him	DEL	
Then a son	DEL	
The winters shorten and the summers lengthen	DEL	
He can save some grain	DEL	
The sheep do not starve	DEL	
The cows no longer sow the fields with their bones	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He slips the animals from their skins, tans their hides into leather, turns the leather into shoes, which he sells to the baron	DEL	
He collects the coins, feels the weight pull his pockets toward the ground	CON	Through ingenuity, Andrejs Smits starts earning money.
So that when the baron finally announces he is willing to sell land to his workers, quick as the rap of a shoe-blackened palm against the doorjamb, my great-great-grandfather comes to the castle to ask whether he might have a chance to buy the property upon which his family has lived	GEN	Andrejs Smits buys the land under his farm from the baron.
The baron says yes—for 4238 rubles	DEL	
Of course, he would be willing to extend credit	DEL	
My great-great-grandfather, quill ready, offers his reply:	DEL	
XXX	DEL	
And with that, the land known as <i>Lembi</i> , once the property of the von Tranze family, becomes his	DEL	
This is the room where your grandmother was born	CON	Ausma shows Inara around in the house, revealing that she and her siblings were born there.
This is the room where I was born	DEL	
This is the room where our brother slept when he came home from the labor camp, after the war, no leg, so weak, there, where the weeds are coming through that opening—that was once a window	DEL	
This is where our mother slept by herself after it happened, her bed here in the corner	DEL	
And this is where she was sitting when the soldiers came, when they told her to get her things, come with them	DEL	
They didn't even bother to close the front door, just left it open so the cats would run inside	DEL	
Ausma dips her head to avoid a root that has punctured the softening ceiling, and briefly suspends her narrative	DEL	
Harijs had driven us in the old car as far as the brush and rutted fields would allow, and Ausma and I had gone the rest of the way on foot, deep into the tick-thick stands of grass, cow parsley, wild caraway, hogweed	CON	The property is overgrown.
We moved slowly	DEL	
The grasses, dried now by the long summer's sun, nipped at our arms, our legs, our necks, leaving long weeping welts	DEL	
I don't know what could possibly be left for us to see here anymore—not after so much time has passed, Ausma had said as we began our slow plow from the car	DEL	
Now we are stepping on shingles that snap underfoot, scattered two-by-fours that throw us off balance and cause our ankles to bow	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Slowly, a roof rises above the grass line to meet us, though its edges sag, brushing the ground in places, like the hem of a skirt coming loose	DEL	
Here and there, sections of standing wood try to hold the shape of an exterior wall, but so many boards have tired and pulled away that the unbroken stretches begin to unnerve me, perhaps because they serve as a reminder that once there had been something on the other side	DEL	
The house has decayed significantly in just the last year, since I first visited	ZERO	The house has decayed significantly in a year.
Through the gaps I see the outlines of empty rooms, as uncertain and hesitant as if drawn by someone trying to map the interior of a childhood home, unrecalled for decades	CON	
My eye is drawn to the ragged hole where a window should be, a sudden movement there—and even though I realize it is simply the yellowing edge of a curtain, twitching, this feels more unsettling, obscene even, than anything else I could have imagined	CON	The house is abandoned.
Oh you are so horrible now, she says	DEL	
She is speaking directly to the collapsing structure in front of us	DEL	
I don't even recognize you	DEL	
I wonder if I have made a mistake, letting her come here, if it might not be too much for her, and I'm about to suggest that we can head back to the car now and home, that I can try to find a way to return one day on my own, when I realize she is moving again, walking ahead of me, tracing the perimeter of the structure one limping step at a time, trying to reacquaint herself with what remains: Here was the front door, the little porch	CON	It is emotional for Ausma to return to <i>Lembi</i> .
And I can see that the door she is pointing to hangs slightly ajar, far enough from its frame that I might be able to hook my fingers around it and pull	DEL	
I look at her	DEL	
She holds my eyes	DEL	
I take this as agreement	DEL	
I step over a pane of unbroken glass, slide my hand behind the splintering wood, and heave	DEL	
The smell rises up to meet me first, earth unturned, but for the claws of mice, hundreds of them, working undisturbed for years, the bitter stink of mold, unrinsed beer bottles left in a corner by someone who must have crawled back here at some point to drink and piss himself in the unseeing dark, thinking no one would ever know	DEL	
I'm inside before I realize it, before I have even turned to ask Ausma if she thinks it a good idea	DEL	
But by the time I stop and turn back to the doorway, she is already slipping through the opening behind me, tugging her skirt away from the jutting nails	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
We move cautiously, flushing rats from mounds of debris with each step	DEL	
This is where we ate our meals, Ausma says		
She has been reclaiming each broken room we enter, trying to return it to the way it was	DEL	
Right here, this is where I saw your grandmother for the very last time	DEL	
She is addressing me now, but it still feels as though she is also directing her words to the house itself, to a presence that emerges only when she is here	DEL	
We walk from room to room, so long that I begin to realize how dangerous this really is, the roots clawing their way through the floor, the softening spots that give way beneath my feet, the angry strip of ceiling hanging above us, shock-white, black-stained with rain, like the inside of a scalp peeled back from the skull	CON	The house is in terrible condition.
This is where we laid his body out, Ausma is saying, here, in this room, in that corner, there	DEL	
Livija had already disappeared by then	DEL	
We didn't know where she was	DEL	
We buried him without her	CON	Inara finds out that Ausma's and Livija's father died at the farm.
The floor creaks beneath our weight, little songs of grief, as if it is also remembering that day, the voices of the mourners	DEL	
<i>Janis</i>	DEL	
That's the name his wife screamed, kept screaming, after she found him, neck twisted on the floor of the barn	CON	The father, Janis, died in an accident, falling from the top of the barn.
<i>Janis and Ausma</i>	DEL	
Those are the names he had been calling, less than an hour before, summoning his son and daughter to him	DEL	
Here, take the wagon and deliver this grain for me to the farmer up the road who helped with our harvest	DEL	
His voice was warm, riffled from drink	CON	On the day of his death, Janis had been drinking
His cousin had shown up that morning, despondent over a woman	DEL	
Janis had taken one look at the man, then pulled two glasses from the shelf and uncorked a bottle	DEL	
It was afternoon now and the day was getting away from them, and so he had decided to delegate, send his two children to make the delivery, while he quickly climbed into the loft to get some hay so his wife could feed the cows	DEL	
Then they could open a new bottle and go back to solving the problems of the heart	DEL	
It was an accident, a miscalculation	CON	
He did not realize how close he was standing to the loft's lip	CON	
A misstep, a wobble	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He tried to set a boot down to steady himself, and stepped back into air	CON	
Ausma would swear later it was ravens that told her first, circling in the sky overhead as she and her brother drove the horse and wagon in the direction of home	DEL	
And that is one kind of telling	DEL	
Here is another: A neighbor racing to the edge of the road, shouting to the figures on the wagon, telling them to hurry home, to <i>Lembi</i>	CON	People believed that he father was synonymous to the house.
That was the name she called out	CON	
Not my great-grandfather's name	CON	
But the name of the farm	CON	

## CHAPTER 9

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
That night, back at Ausma's house, we eat in silence	CON	Talking about her father's death brings a lot of emotions in Ausma.
Ausma nibbles at her slice of brown bread, pushes a potato around her plate with the back of her fork, the tin tips of its tines chiming softly in protest	DEL	
Finally, she speaks	DEL	
I haven't talked about the day he died, since it happened, she says	DEL	
And now I can't stop thinking about it, seeing him again in my mind, his neck	DEL	
Her voice catches	DEL	
Harijs looks at her for a long time, then at me	CON	Harijs tries to help Ausma get over her pain by changing the subject to telling his silly stories .
Did you know my father once danced with a bear? he asks	DEL	
Ausma sets down her fork, pushes back from the table	DEL	
We watch as she slippers off toward her room	DEL	
The door latches	DEL	
Then there is the unmistakable sound of crying	DEL	
Harijs presses on	DEL	
He was walking in the forest one day, and he surprised the bear	DEL	
The bear reared up, like this—Harijs rises off his stool to full height, waggles his trap- sized hands like claws—and my father knew he didn't have time to run, if he turned his back he'd surely be dead	DEL	
So he made himself as big as he could and rushed straight at the bear, with all his strength, with his arms out wide, as if to clasp a bride	DEL	
And— <i>bang</i> , Harijs smashes the meat of his palms together—he and the bear, they met, chest to chest	DEL	
My father held on tight to the bear's middle, and the bear held tight to him	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Like this, each standing on two legs, they danced	DEL	
How did it end? I ask, although I realize as soon as the words are out of my mouth that <i>how</i> is never the question that drives the telling of any anecdote in Latvia	DEL	
What matters, as with all stories here, is the unspoken <i>why</i>	DEL	
But my father didn't let go	DEL	
He said some words to the bear, right into its ear, and for whatever reason, the bear finally stopped	DEL	
It dropped down to all fours and it looked in his eyes one last time	DEL	
Then it turned, and it ran	DEL	
Who knows why	DEL	
Maybe—and here Harijs meets my eyes—it was tired of dancing	DEL	
At this, Harijs rises and shuffles down the hall to Ausma's room	DEL	
I can hear him rapping gently with his big hands, then calling to her, his cheek to the door, the stubbled skin of it tracing the wood like sandpaper	CON	Harijs offers his support to Ausma.
Don't cry, my love, he whispers, his own voice breaking	CON	
Not quite ten years after my great-great-grandfather signs the deed to Lembi and becomes the owner of its land, as one century begins to slip into the next, a poem is published in Latvian	CON	Andrejs Pumpurs poem Lacplesis (The Bear Slayer) becomes a national source of strength.
The poem's author is a man, magnificently whiskered, with a beard that bristles like a pine's needles	DEL	
Beneath it, he wears a face that looks as if it has been summoned from a series of precise angles, like the view through a surveyor's transit—an instrument he has spent a good percentage of his adult life carrying through the countryside east of Riga, taking exact measure of the land and its people, noting the new farmsteads that are emerging, now freed from the old outlines of the baron's estates, making the once invisible borders of the peasants' presence here something definite in the world	DEL	
He knows the peasants' stories	DEL	
The words to the secret histories they convey to each other when they sing to one another, the way others learn by reading books	DEL	
He understands because he himself comes from a family of farmers who worked as tenants on an estate	DEL	
And although he is part of the first generation that is born free, able, in theory, to choose any life now, not just the life of a serf, he finds there are still limits on what he can hope for himself	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He is picked by his local parish priests as one of just three peasants' children to study for the first time for free at one of the church schools where the barons and other well-to-do residents normally send their offspring	DEL	
Where all the subjects are taught in German	DEL	
And although he excels in school, the top student in his class after three years, his family doesn't have the money for him to pursue further study, and when he goes back to the priests to appeal for help, he is pushed to forget his academic dreams, to focus instead on making his living as a laborer	DEL	
And so he labors	DEL	
He helps his father manage the properties of a series of manors, turns wood in the winters as a carpenter	DEL	
He finds work as a ferryman, floating people across the river Daugava, dragging his pole through its siltywaters, watching his changing reflection dart and shiver, like the fish that trail in the raft's wake	DEL	
He is in his midtwenties when he finally becomes a surveyor's assistant, his pockets lined with levels and rulers	DEL	
And also: pens	DEL	
Because ideas are coming to him, clipped, precise lines of poetry, arranged like the grids of his emerging maps	DEL	
Even as he sets the boundaries of the existing world, he can see the invisible one that fits inside of it, the hidden inhabitants and phenomena and cultural landmarks that appear whenever they are given voice, whether spoken or sung	DEL	
He uses these old ideas to craft new lines of verse, jots them in the margins of his field notes, next to his calculations	DEL	
And he senses that this could be the beginning of something more sustained, an epiceven	DEL	
Upon his return, Andrejs Pumpurs begins to compose a series of cantos that flow from him, a strange liquid rilling of time	DEL	
Chants, he calls them	DEL	
It's as if he has set himself back upon the river he once worked as a ferryman, his thoughts drifting like the old raft he rowed from shore to shore, his subconscious sending to the surface everything he has ever read or heard or seen	DEL	
At last, the poet stares directly into the depths of the Daugava, imagines a face taking form in the silt: A boy, but with ears furred and veined like a bear's	DEL	
The poet plucks the bear-boy from the river—and writes him into an alternate mythopoetic version of the past	CON	Lacplesis tells the story of a child part man and bear who has special powers and can rip a bear apart.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
One where he is a foundling, the child of man and bear, chosen specifically by the gods, and lifted from murk of the river where he has been cast, to help unite the Latvians against their occupiers	DEL	
In the poet's rendering, the boy is sent by the gods to live with the king of one of the pagan tribes	DEL	
One day, while they are walking through forest, they are startled by a bear	DEL	
It charges at the king, but the boy leaps between them and rips the bear's jaw from its head, using only his hands	CON	
From this point on, the boy is known as Bear Slayer, and soon after, he sets off to pit himself against witches and demons, and other dark forces, preparing himself for the day he will finally meet the Black Knight, and his army of German crusaders, so bent on breaking and subjugating Bear Slayer and his fellow pagans	DEL	
By the time the final, decisive duel arrives, it seems possible that the Bear Slayer, who up to now has only known success after success, might triumph	DEL	
But as they clash, the Black Knight manages to slice off both Bear Slayer's ears, having grasped that they are the source of his extraordinary strength	DEL	
Stripped of his powers, and reduced to just a man, Bear Slayer fights as hard as he can	DEL	
He strikes the Black Knight with his sword and splits his armor	DEL	
The Black Knight in turn breaks Bear Slayer's sword	DEL	
Weaponless, Bear Slayer launches himself at the Black Knight	DEL	
They grapple, inching closer and closer to the edge of a cliff	DEL	
For a moment, it appears as if Bear Slayer will find just enough leverage to tip the Black Knight over the lip	DEL	
But as the knight tumbles backwards, he grabs hold of Bear Slayer	DEL	
Together, they plummet into the river from which Bear Slayer first rose, and they vanish	CON	In the final fight of the poem, both the hero and the villain die.
Unveiled at a time when the former serfs are just beginning to ask, however hesitantly, What is our collective identity?, Who are we?, How shall we think of ourselves?, the poet's portrait of the hero Bear Slayer emerges as a potent metaphor	DEL	
It will embed deeply in the emerging national consciousness, to be told and retold, again and again	GEN, ZERO	The story of Lacplesis becomes deeply embedded in the National consciousness.
The character of the Black Knight grows more and more fluid over the years, assuming new incarnations, depending on what the poem's audience needs him to be at any given time	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Still, as heroic national epics go, it's a curious one – decidedly downbeat, unresolved, the hero fails, sails off a cliff to his death	DEL	
But it's the last lines, in particular, that have always unsettled me, in a way I could never quite name	DEL	
Something about Harijs's bear story tonight has sent me to the bookshelf in search of the exact text, not because I think Harijs's bear story isn't his own story, but because, sometimes, two very different stories have a way of asking the same question	DEL	
In the final lines of the Bear Slayer, we learn, in fact, that the moment that has happened is still happening, that we are all trapped in a kind of eternal time	DEL	
And this means that the knight and Bear Slayer did not actually disappear to their deaths, but instead remain hidden beneath the water's surface, only to be endlessly resurrected, always returned to precisely the same spot, forced to reenact the same last steps	DEL	
They clash, they tear flesh, briefly, they teeter	DEL	
Then, they begin their long slow pinwheeling descent toward the water	DEL	
It never varies, never ends	DEL	
In some interpretations, this suggestion of an eternal struggle is said to evoke the promise of transcendence—that the Bear Slayer can never really die, because he was never actually alive to begin with	DEL	
Other interpretations focus on wording that implies, one day, the Bear Slayer's struggle could in fact end, but that it is up to us, as witnesses, to make it stop, the moment we assume his struggle as our own	DEL	
Maybe it's because I'm still thinking about what Harijs said earlier, but tonight, all I can see in the ending is an unbearable weariness—the characters never allowed to relive any other part of their story	DEL	
Always, they are returned only to their worst last moments, of violence and suffering	CON	The eternal struggle discussed at the end of Lacplesis makes Inara question her actions towards Ausma and the way she impacts her.
Then they must repeat this, over and over and over again	DEL	
We are always there, too, watching	DEL	
No questions tomorrow, I say, but Ausma is in her room, in Harijs's arms I hope, and I am alone in this dark, with what I know and what I don't know struggling to arrange themselves into some kind of form inside of me	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
There was a time, in the not-so-very-long ago, when the site of my great- grandfather's death would have served as the very place all new lives together should begin	CON	In the countryside, the barn was a place for celebrations.
Back then, what young couples knew of love came from following the bobbing of torchlight through the bosky dark, away from the sounds of their celebrating families, to the barn	DEL	
There, a bed would be spread on the floor to hold them on their wedding night, their bodies writing the first faint outlines of a future together in the dust	DEL	
My grandparents didn't have a proper Latvian wedding.	CON	Latvians have certain wedding traditions. Inara's grandparents wedding was not traditional
They didn't dance for two days straight	DEL	
No one wove my grandmother the bride's traditional crown made from the leaves of the bilberry	DEL	
And at the stroke of midnight, my grandfather did not remove the crown from my grandmother's head with the tip of a sword, then let the crown slide slowly down to the length of the blade to the hilt as everyone watched	DEL	
My grandmother's mother did not step forward to tie a scarf around my grandmother's bare head, signaling that she was now a married woman	DEL	
And the next morning, the entire wedding party did not burst into the barn, where the two slept, beating pots and pans, driving the new couple to the nearest spring so they might cup their palms in the icy water, then take turns washing their scent from each other's faces with the tips of their fingers	DEL	
My grandparents didn't marry at <i>Lembi</i> , although, unlike Ausma and Harijs, they could have	DEL	
At that time, <i>Lembi</i> still existed	DEL	
My great-grandfather was still alive, his fall in the barn, and the beginning of the end of farm, still more than three years off in the distant future	DEL	
Instead, my grandmother and grandfather said their vows in a registry office in Riga	GEN	Inara's grandparents married in a registry office in Riga
They traded what appeared to be plain gold bands, with no other family, save my grandmother's brother, in attendance	DEL	
They never spoke much of their wedding, but from what little I had heard, I was left with the image of something somber, intensely private, muted like the moth-soft scuffling of their voices that I could sometimes hear, in the days when I lived with them	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
During those years I lived with my grandparents, I had seen my grandfather grab my grandmother by the hips as she tried to pass when he sat reading the paper at the kitchen table, or when he was perched on the edge of their bed, unlacing his boots with thick, work-bent fingers	CON	Inara's grandparents had a quiet but loving relationship.
He would bury his face in the hollow of my grandmother's back as she bucked and tried to get away from him, but she would be laughing, too, and I sensed that if I had not been there, she would not have been in such a hurry to slip from him	DEL	
They did not say anything to each other in these moments	DEL	
What passed between them was silent, physical	CON	
He was not free with praise	CON	Inara's grandfather was quiet and introverted.
When he wished to be extremely complimentary, he used the phrase <i>Not bad</i>	DEL	
And if he was feeling especially moved by something: <i>Pretty good</i>	DEL	
In his later years, however, my grandfather could not talk about my grandmother without his voice catching	CON	Emils felt happy to be with his wife.
<i>What a beautiful woman—I am the luckiest man</i> , he would say to anyone and to no one, and then he would paw at the tears that collected in the corner of his one good eye	DEL	
But such displays of emotion always left him drained and mute, rocking back and forth, until finally he found the strength to reemerge, although by then he would launch into long, rambling stories about economics, the lessons one could learn from Latvia's pork and sugar export policies of the 1930s, the business model of the chicken farm his family used to own in the town of Madona—anything, it seemed, to save himself from being overwhelmed by his feelings again	CON	The past traumas took an emotional toll on Emils.
Once, at a gathering celebrating my grandparents' anniversary, my grandfather, who had been lost in one of his silences, suddenly turned to me: I know that she loved someone else before me	CON	Livija had been in love with Emils' best friend before Emils.
I know because he was my best friend	DEL	
He looked directly at me, his glass eye milky	DEL	
I already knew her before I met her	DEL	
My friend told me all about her	DEL	
As he talked about her, I thought, I hope one day I could have a girlfriend like that	CON	Emils was in love with Livija from afar.
And then I saw her	DEL	
She had long hair then, two braids down her back	DEL	
I couldn't stop thinking about her	DEL	
It hurt, how much I thought of her	DEL	
So do you know what I did next?	DEL	
It's why I am here now, grandfather	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Wandering this forest about forty kilometers from Ausma's house, having negotiated a ride with a relative this morning, so I can leave her in peace; why I am scanning the bark of every tree I pass, trying not to think of the ticks I am stirring as I stomp through the underbrush	DEL	
Beneath my feet, a thick carpet of bilberry	DEL	
I can smell the scent the leaves release as they are crushed under my boots, like a jar of old pennies, the long-forgotten drawer of a basement workbench, full of washers, screws, bent nails	DEL	
I took a knife and I went out behind our school, to the woods, he said, and when I was sure no one could see me, I carved her name into a birch tree	CON	Emils had carved Livija's name into a tree behind the school to express his love for her.
This land has always made its own fables, like the one about the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the country's former serfs who came to live in a palace that had once belonged to one of the barons who had ruled them	DEL	
The palace was called Cesvaine, and the children slept in its turrets; they sipped cabbage soup in the former grand dining room, where stone bears nearly as tall as they were supported the mantelpiece of a fireplace on their great shaggy shoulders	DEL	
The castle was made from stones, placed by architects brought specially from Berlin for the job, the vision of one Adolf Gerhard Boris Emil von Wulf, who should not, under any circumstances, be confused with a von Wolff, a separate baronial dynasty that happened to rule just a few kilometers down the road	DEL	
And then comes the revolt of 1905	DEL	
Even though the country's former serfs, like my great-great-grandfather and his descendants, have lived as free men and women for almost ninety years by this point, most remain landless, unlike my great-great-grandfather and his descendants	CON	In 1905, the former serfs start a demonstration in Riga.
So, the peasants venture to Riga, the capital, drawn by stories of electric lights and streetcars, only to find that they still go to bed hungry and frustrated, that the hands of a good milker, the hands that can guide a draft horse at the plow, mean nothing on the assembly lines of the newly opened factories	DEL	
One day, some of the frustrated assemble on the banks of the Daugava, which runs through the center of Riga—the river into which Bear Slayer was flung—to try to dredge the depths of their dissatisfaction	DEL	
High unemployment	DEL	
Crushing poverty	DEL	
Imperial rule	DEL	
No way to change anything	DEL	
No self-representation	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They find that fury rises easily, there on the riverbanks, that they like the way it threatens to surge and crest	CON	The demonstration becomes violent.
They chant and throw stones	DEL	
The police don't like it, though, and open fire on the crowd	DEL	
A teenage boy crumples—a member of one of the Jewish labor groups that has been instrumental in organizing the city's workers	DEL	
Everyone runs	DEL	
And at last, something breaks open, like the ice that cracks beneath the feet of those who scramble onto the frozen stretch of water, rather than run into the policemen's guns	DEL	
The screams beneath the ice travel the Daugava, echoing deeper and deeper into the Latvian countryside	DEL	
Seventy-three people shot or drowned	CON	People die in the protests.
Two hundred injured	CON	
As this news from the capital ripples through the remote villages, anger mounts	DEL	
For all the promises of freedom and reform since the emancipation of the serfs, nothing has changed	DEL	
The peasants have no political voice or influence	DEL	
All the power still rests in the hands of the wealthy German landowners, with the representatives of the tsar	DEL	
What happens next is as if everyone suddenly dreams the same waking dream of revenge: across the countryside, the peasants take up torches and rocks, and head to the nearest manor house	GEN	In 1905, peasants across the country attack and demolish castles and manors.
For several days, they burn and they smash, until hundreds of castles and manors across the region have been reduced to ash and bone-char and rubble	DEL	
Remarkably, these days of fury do not touch Cesvaine palace	GEN	Peasants do not attack Cesvaine palace.
It sits undisturbed, as the sculpture on the roof swishes his tail in the direction of the other local wolves, who do not slip fury's attention so easily—their den immolated as the live-in servants stand and gawp in their nightclothes	DEL	
The ruins have not stopped smoldering when the tsar dispatches troops	DEL	
Together, with mercenaries hired by the barons, they fly through the occupied lands, executing, burning, flogging	CON	The peasants are punished for their attacks and many more die.
More than two thousand peasants will die, nearly three thousand more shipped to the edges of the known world, to the endless and eternal steppes	CON	
And fury slips back under the ice	CON	The peasants again accept their conditions.
A relatively quiet decade passes, in which my grandmother and grandfather are born	DEL	
Storks build nests atop Cesvaine's chimneys	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Deer venture closer, with no hounds to drive them back	DEL	
From his perch, the palace wolf watches, sword clenched in one paw, always ready	DEL	
He has a good view when the marching starts	DEL	
All across the countryside, local boys emerge wearing the uniforms of the occupying empire, tsar-approved boiled brown wool that absorbs the kickback of the rifles that they aim at the kaiser's advancing army	DEL	
But it does not protect them from the winter's bitter cold, so that they take to covering their heads with sackcloth, punching holes only large enough so that their eyes might make out the targets they can lock in their sights	DEL	
They are completely shrouded, anonymous, an army of ghosts	DEL	
Even alive, they are already as good as dead, rabbiting about underground, screaming faceless through the trenches, apparitions emerging and retreating into the chemical fog	DEL	
And then Lenin makes his move, and now which uniform shall they wear? They've just fought on behalf of one occupier, against another potential occupier, as has been done for centuries	DEL	
But no matter the uniform, the outcome is always the same	DEL	
They always fight only for the right to remain ghosts in their own land	DEL	
What does it take for a ghost to finally find its voice? Another country's revolution, a Bolshevik coup, a tsar slaughtered in a basement, a kaiser's losing campaign	DEL	
One by one, the distractions mount, until suddenly there's a pause that extends long enough for a man to take the stage of the national theater in Riga and announce, This place is real, this country is real	CON	In 1918, Latvia's independence is declared.
It exists	DEL	
There are still two more chaotic years, years of civil war and uncertainty, before independence is official	DEL	
But finally, Cesvaine palace, which was once situated at the edge of a frontier known to the rest of the world most recently as Livland, wakes up at the close of World War I to find itself on new ground	DEL	
Once, this region answered to many names, organized by its occupiers into duchies, littoral zones, provinces	DEL	
Now all that has been reclaimed and rechristened as the free and independent republic known as Latvia	DEL	
And my grandparents are among the first generation to grow up, officially, from the time of their earliest childhood, as Latvians	DEL	Inara's grandparents are the first generation to grow up calling themselves Latvians.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Among the republic's citizens, the period leading up to this declaration of independence, of growing national consciousness, is known as the time of awakening—an interesting phrase because it suggests the process of achieving consciousness, but not yet fully inhabiting it	CON	During the awakening, schools were set up in the former baron manors and castles.
In the spirit of this state of awakening, someone decides that the perfect setting for adolescence would be a baron's empty castle	CON	
So the new tenants come, dragging trunks up the stairs, palming balustrades with hands blistered from handling harvest scythes	DEL	
The first class of Cesvaine arrives in 1919, one year after independence is claimed, farmers' children all of them, transplanted from the fields to this boarding school that will prepare them for a spot in the new national university system, if they so desire	DEL	
They are Latvia's future, the inheritors of its awakening, and yet, as soon as they cross the palace threshold, they will occupy a world that operates outside of real time	DEL	
While their parents and grandparents head out to the fields under a heavy sun, the children gather in the castle's cool ballroom to learn folk dances that mimic the motions of the harvest rituals	DEL	
But also, just as easily, they slip out of the old costumes and into heels and drop-waisted dresses, smooth their bobbed hair and pose for formal school portraits, which they then carefully paste into photo albums that in just a few years will be abandoned all over again, left in houses from which they are taken, or left in houses that they must flee so that they are not taken	DEL	
All that will come later, when time and fury has caught back up with them	DEL	
For now, there is only the strange, protected space of the castle	DEL	
There is my grandfather, arriving from his family's chicken farm	CON	Emils was one of the first children to go to school in Cesvaine castle.
He is already starting to turn in on himself, intense and silent, a boy who has learned from an early age that he cannot depend on his parents, who spend most of their time locked behind their respective doors, his father with a bottle, his mother with a bottle, too, but also one of her many dear women friends who come to visit—and then stay overnight	CON	Emils comes from a well-off but troubled family with both of the parents drinking and neglecting their children.
They are an affluent family by the standards of the countryside, but their fortune is emptying as quickly as all those bottles piling behind locked doors	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Years later, the only story he will repeat from this time is how his mother once left a roast unattended on the kitchen counter, and in the time she realized her mistake, the cat had wrestled it to the floor and gnawed it to the bone	DEL	
He will tell this story in place of all the others he could tell about what he knows of disappearing, of how in a few years his younger sister will stop eating, until there is almost nothing left to bury, the coffin so light it is unbearable to lift	DEL	
By the time my grandfather enters the castle he has already shed his attachment to the land, to home	CON	Already as a boy, Emils has lost trust in people.
He wants no part of the family farm and its memories	DEL	
He prefers the certainty of numbers, likes their assurance and solidity	DEL	
He particularly likes the idea of economics, formulas and models that might render at least some aspects of human behavior predictable	CON	Emils was interested in math and economics.
With his round wire glasses and his hair groomed so precisely as to show the path of his comb's every tooth, he looks as if he has just come from a wood-paneled study full of books, where the only sound is the susurrant of paper as he flips through his notes, not the feathered, squalling, manure-booted chaos of the poultry farm	DEL	
The first friend he makes at Cesvaine is nothing like him—as blond as he is dark, a joker, a tippler, winking and unrestrained	DEL	
He looks like the land he is from: weathered like the hay that is stacked on racks to dry in the sun, eyes as pale as the petals of flax, a tip to his head like the cricked branch of an oak	DEL	
His new friend is always writing letters	DEL	
To whom, my grandfather wants to know	DEL	
That is when he says her name to my grandfather for the first time	DEL	
In two years, she will be old enough to join them at the castle	DEL	
By then, my grandfather has memorized everything about her	CON	Emils fell in love with Livija before meeting her.
He knows the name of the farm from whence her letters come	DEL	
He knows the confessions that these letters contain, the secrets she believes she is sharing only with his friend, and is careful to hide from everyone else, especially her father, who is certain she is too young to feel the way she claims she does and has forbidden the relationship, even banned her from speaking the boy's name	DEL	
So she writes it	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Maybe this is why one day, not long after she has finally taken her place among Cesvaine's pupils, my grandfather does what he does, why he slips a knife in his pocket and heads out by himself into the forest surrounding the castle, where the baron once stalked his harts, why my grandfather picks the white trunk of a birch, its bark thin like paper	DEL	
He cannot tell his only friend that he has fallen in love with his girlfriend	DEL	
He cannot say her name	DEL	
So he takes out the knife, presses the point in the bark	DEL	
And he writes it	DEL	
Livija		
A few months later, while home on school holiday, his best friend will step on a nail that drives through the flesh of his foot	GEN	Emils's best friend, Livija's boyfriend died.
He will be dead before the holiday is over, under the ground by the time classes in the castle resume	DEL	
She's too distraught to attend the funeral, too distraught to speak of him when my grandfather tries to approach her in their shared grief	DEL	
He leaves the palace soon after, off to Riga for a spot at the university there, and he tries to forget her	GEN	Emils moved to Riga after Cesvaine and became a scholar.
He channels all his intensity into his studies, eventually earns his master's degree in economics, and a position at the university as an assistant professor	DEL	
By day he works for a textile mill, running their books, at night, he teaches	GEN	Emils worked two jobs.
He wears a fedora now and a marten-collared overcoat and carries a briefcase full of student papers	DEL	
After his evening lectures, he rides the streetcar to the apartment he shares with two others from the university, located next to what looks like a park, dark and wild with ground elder	GEN	Emils lived in a shared apartment in Riga.
It is really a mass grave, the site where bodies of Riga's plague victims were once dumped when this was far outside the city limits	DEL	
One day, one of my grandfather's flat-mates announces his intent to move out, and so the landlady posts a notice in the newspaper	DEL	
A new tenant is found while my grandfather is off visiting his family, already moved in by the time he returns two weeks later	DEL	
It is a shock to both of them when he opens the apartment door to find her standing there	CON	Livija moves into the apartment Emils shares with his mates.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She has left the countryside to accept a job as a bookkeeper with, as she liked to say because she liked the sound of the phrase, Latvia's leading bacon export factory, and she has been looking everywhere for a place to live that she could both tolerate and afford, crossing off each circled listing one by one, until finally arriving here	GEN	Livija has moved to Riga to work as an accountant.
Her room is just down the hall from his, but soon she is no longer using it, instead sharing his single bed	GEN	Emils and Livija soon become a couple.
If he ever wonders whether it is because he is the closest thing she has to what she has lost, he keeps it to himself	DEL	
Just as he never talks about the fact that the luck that brought her to him is the result of someone else's misfortune, that the life that grows inside of her is because of someone else's death	GEN	Livija becomes pregnant and they decide to marry.
They make an appointment with the registry office	DEL	
What they do not yet know, as they take these steps toward what they imagine will be a shared future, is that the future has already been decided, without them: Because, two years before, right around the time they were finding each other again in the apartment on Peace Street, somewhere in Moscow, men were meeting, too, to pretend they were not speaking of war	CON	They marry during the onset of WWII.
This is what a secret pact looks like: Men in suits gathered in a paneled room, too many for the small space, their damp handshaking and back-clasping overseen by an unremarkable portrait of Lenin, hunched, severe-looking, as if he is not happy with the messy state of the desk behind which he has been placed for the purposes of the painting	DEL	
In real life, there is also a desk, buffed to a high polish, fussy with paperweights, ceremonial ink blotter, heavy glass-shaded lamp, magnifying lens, three rotary telephones	DEL	
And now, a representative of Hitler's government and a representative of Stalin's government are taking turns placing the nibs of their respective quills to a paper laid upon the desk	DEL	
And it would appear as if the men are doing nothing more remarkable than simply scratching their signatures on this paper, as Stalin, very much not a portrait, looms over their shoulders	DEL	
Still, if we were to pick up the magnifying glass that lies in the corner of desk and train it in the direction of Stalin's mustache, we would see, just beneath the screen of it, a grin so unrestrained that the waxed tips of his facial hair appear as if they are levitating, as if electrically charged, trying to conduct Lenin's attention	DEL	
This is our hint that something more is happening here, something that cannot be seen as it is happening, only in retrospect	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And what is happening is this: with their signatures, these men are effectively scratching away the borders of the country once known as Latvia	DEL	
Proposed in its place: an undefined block of territory to be known as the <i>Soviet sphere of interest</i>	CON	Under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact Latvia's name was to be forgotten.
Publicly, the men will say this meeting was about finalizing an economic trade agreement	DEL	
And the agreement is a trade, of sorts	DEL	
Russia secretly promises, for the time being, to do nothing so Germany can invade Poland, then Lithuania	DEL	
In return, Germany secretly promises, for the time being, to do nothing so Russia can invade Latvia, Finland and Estonia	DEL	
When the ink is dry, Germany makes straight for western Poland	DEL	
And World War II begins	ZERO	
It will take some time for the news of this annexation on paper to actually reach the people of Latvia, who will spend the next three years that follow the secret meeting living as if this no-country is still their home, completely ignorant that its name has been unsaid, that in textbooks and on schoolhouse maps in Russia, children are already learning that Latvia is part of the USSR	DEL	
By the time my grandparents finally enter the hushed seclusion of the registry office, the consequences of this secret pact between Stalin and Hitler are becoming painfully clear	DEL	
In the span of the past twelve months, Latvia has already been invaded twice	DEL	
First by Russia, expanding its <i>sphere of influence</i> , as agreed upon in the pact	DEL	
Then, just a year later, by Germany, when, flush with mounting victories, Hitler decides that perhaps the pact has outlived its tactical usefulness	DEL	
And in that small, unremarkable and nearly empty room, which sits roughly in the middle of the two opposing sides, my grandfather places a ring on my grandmother's finger, and she places a ring on his finger	CON	Getting married, Livija and Emils attempted to create a life together in the face of the looming terror.
Together, they attempt their own fragile, muted pact	DEL	
Inside his wedding band: an inscription, a wish, a plea	DEL	
The same letters he etched in the tree—Livija—his incantation against vanishing	DEL	
Not fifteen years ago, a fire ripped through Cesvaine, as if set by the invisible hands of an angry mob of serfs that had suddenly appeared to complete the unfinished job of 1905	CON	Inara went to Cesvaine castle to find the tree that Emils marked but was unable to.
I have come already certain of what I want to find	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
I spend what feels like hours in the surrounding forest, willing the letters to rise on scarred bark	DEL	
But every birch I find is bare, unmarked	CON	

CHAPTER 11

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Before the family farm felt war; before it absorbed the difference between the tumbling pitch of a bomb, and that of my great-grandfather's body; before it sheltered my grandmother Livija's youth, then stole Ausma's; before it was lost, then regained, then lost again, as if in imitation of the confused cycles of the country in which it found itself—this is what the eighty acres that would one day be <i>Lembi</i> knew: For over a billion years, uneventful stillness	DEL	
Once the Earth's crust cooled, once the days of rifting and rending ended, this part of the continent chose for itself, at least inwardly, an identity of stability and caution	DEL	
Geologically speaking, it was not in the land's nature to move or to drift	DEL	
Ice came, vast sheets that flowed and stretched and pooled across the land's surface	DEL	
When enough ice built upon the existing ice, it would walk	DEL	
Slowly	DEL	
Grinding everything beneath it flat, dragging with it clots of debris	DEL	
When the ice finally began to melt, it left in its wake, upon the scraped and leveled landscape, all that it had gathered, deep tills of sediment, rich hummocky deposits that could be read under the feet like braille	CON	Latvian landscape is level, with low hills.
What passed for hills swelled low, blister-like beneath the Earth's skin	DEL	
The steepest pitched no higher than three hundred of a man's boldest strides	DEL	
It must have been a relief, then, to those first settlers who finally stumbled to a halt upon this prone place, those who were said to have walked without direction on leathered feet until at last they reached what felt like the edge of everywhere	DEL	
There, in the mossy light, amid the sound of grabbling wings and the croaking bogs and the unceasing horizon, they said, We are tired, and this will do, and burrowed like ants under the flat fat blankets of soil	DEL	
But the planed relief of their new home, the welcome lack of obstacles also meant that this was a geography that would expose them, that there was nothing to stall the pace of whatever force might be rippling across its surface this very moment	DEL	
At least it offered an unobstructed view of their ever-changing futures	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And on this particular June day, in 1940, the land says their future looks like this: the flea-brown tunic of a Russian soldier moving at the edge of the meadow	DEL	
This is how the concepts of invasion, occupation, then war announce themselves to Ausma	DEL	
It began with the vague hissing of the radio inside the farmhouse at <i>Lembi—Poland and Germany</i> and <i>English naval blockades in the Baltic Sea</i> ; letters from her sister in Riga about shop shelves running empty, not a grain of salt in the whole city; the adults discussing rumors that the president is about to send Riga’s redundant workers to the countryside to work on the farms, to help the country produce more food; the arguments over the meaning of a government announcement that the country has entered into a <i>Mutual-Assistance Treaty with Russia</i> , and will <i>open its borders</i> for the Russians <i>to establish military bases</i> , whether this is, in fact, a free choice	CON	WWII eradicated Ausma’s plans for the future.
All these words manifesting themselves now in the flea-brown tunic of a Russian soldier, set in silhouette against the Junewheat	CON	
It is the summer of Ausma’s thirteenth year, and she has been imagining what it will be like to take her turn, finally, at Cesvaine, the boarding school for farmers’ children, in the fall	DEL	
She has no idea the sighting of the soldier will signal the end of her formal education	CON	
Never again will she sit in a classroom, staring at a chalkboard map that tells her she lives in Latvia, while from the back of the room, her husband-to-be secretly studies her studying that map, the cool rivering of her braids, the smart path they cut down the back of her dress, a dress he thinks is beautiful, and which she thinks that she hates, tugging self-consciously at the armpits, another hand-me-down—her clothes are only ever hand-me-downs, darted and unhemmed, ripped and reseamed—left to her by her older sister when she decided to move to the capital	DEL	
Where once, her sister, Livija, had come home to <i>Lembi</i> nearly every weekend on the train, dragging back with her grainsacks of potatoes, knobs of cabbage, scoops from her mother’s wooden salt box—the countryside has not suffered the way Riga has with the blockades—she has been returning less and less, choosing to stay in the city now that she has fallen in love with someone in Riga	CON	As time passes, Ausma must accept that Livija is living a different life separate from her.
She tells Ausma the story of how they came to be together, meeting first at Cesvaine, then at the apartment on Peace Street, the whole sad, startling story— not her mother, not her father, just Ausma	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And Ausma feels, for the first time in her life, like the letters bound in ribbon and addressed to her sister from the boy she loved, which Ausma had found and then rehid among Livija's things	DEL	
And maybe, later that night, as she rolls over in her bed, back at Lembi, trying to find a comfortable position for her burning, cramping calves, and a wisp of hair catches on her cheek, releasing the dusky smell of dried rain, maybe she thinks this will be her template for what it is to grow up	CON	Ausma looked up to Livija and felt safety in being her younger sister.
That all she has to do is follow Livija	CON	
Watch the bees, her brother, Janis, tells her	DEL	
See where they're flying— today, over to the raspberry cane	DEL	
Her brother is twenty-four, and next in line to run the farm, and he has already begun to take over some of its operations	GEN	Ausma had an older brother, Janis.
For as long as anyone can remember, bees have been a part of <i>Lembi</i> , the wooden boxes that serve as their hives spread from orchard to field to forest's edge	GEN	The family kept bees in <i>Lembi</i> for generations.
Janis learned to care for the bees from his father, who learned from his father before him, back in the days when they kept the bees in cavities they had carved in trees, and reached by climbing, or in hollow logs	CON	
Janis thinks maybe Ausma might have the gift, too	DEL	
The bees of <i>Lembi</i> are said to make honey that tastes like time, sweet and sad and ancient, as if it contains all the memories of all the things that had ever grown and died there	DEL	
Their keepers believe it's because they speak to the bees, soothe them with the touch of their breath, rather than smoke	DEL	
Where did you go today? they ask	DEL	
What did you see? When it comes time to open the hives, to remove the racks and cut the capping of wax from the combs that tell them the honey is ready, the bees skim their arms like gossamer sleeves, scarf their skulls as softly as silk handkerchiefs, beard their cheeks like light fuzzings of stubble	DEL	
They never sting	DEL	
Midsummer is the busiest season, the racks so heavy they require four hands to lift, any gaps or cracks around the edges daubed thick with the mixture of bee spit and wax and the resin that rushes like blood from a cut bud or a tree branch, which the bees use to seal their hives, to keep out harmful things	DEL	
Her brother shows Ausma how to scrape at the red braids of it with the edge of a knife, to save it in jars, as a salve for cuts or burns, as a balm for toothaches, for mouths that erupt in sores	GEN	Her brother teaches Ausma beekeeping.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He knows by the subtle variation of yellows and browns in the pollen on their legs which flowers they have visited, heather or clover or buckwheat, although she can't see it yet	DEL	
The sound of the bees is calming, like sleeping while you're still awake	DEL	
She loves the way they seem to return to the same hives, like the cows entering the barn each night, always tramping without any prompting into their own stalls	DEL	
And when you shake into your open palm the cakes of pollen that the bees tamp down like secrets in the bottom of their cells, then press them against your lips, it's almost possible to imagine you are tasting their memories, a flavor that is at once lush and chalky and acrid, like touching your tongue to humus or bone	DEL	
And then, one day, Ausma is stung	CON	After being stung, Ausma loses her trust in bees.
The way her skin puckers and blooms, they know this will put an end to her apprenticeship	CON	
She watches from a distance now	DEL	
Inside the house, her mother Alma sleeps	DEL	
No one can say what's wrong with her, what's left her so weak, pinned to the bed, like a bee with wet wings	DEL	
Later, it will be easy to see this as the summer when all the loss that is to come reveals itself to her at once, using the cover of visible things, like when they would pour spoonfuls of molten lead into a pail of water on the first night of the new year, searching the twists and folds for a likeness in the living world, a shape to which they could attach a narrative that would foretell the future	DEL	
But when she first spots the Russian soldier moving through the fields, she's not thinking of signs or portents	CON	During WWII, Latvia is invaded.
She's not thinking about much of anything, except for cows, bees, bicycles, Cesvaine, her sister's new love	DEL	
It's the first foreign soldier she has seen, outside of books	DEL	
And he looks so small	DEL	
A bee far from the hive	DEL	
Then she sees the long solemn columns, clodding the roads	CON	
Next, the tanks slowly, deliberately snailing their way toward Riga	CON	
They chew runnels in the roads that make the horses balk for weeks	CON	
Later, inside the farmhouse, when they turn on the radio, it crackles with news that is not so much news, as aphorism	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
<i>I am remaining in my place, you remain in yours</i> , says Latvia's president, a former dairy farmer, who in his youth, was among those seized after the unrest of 1905, briefly imprisoned, before fleeing to America to avoid further punishment, to the state of Nebraska, where they also love cows	CON	The president of Latvia, Karlis Ulmanis tries to calm his people down.
He spent several years there, before deciding to return to Latvia just in time to assist in the country's fight for her independence, and became a significant force in the emerging government, a darling of the agricultural party	DEL	
Then, he took control in a bloodless coup, saying the good of the country demanded a firm hand, clear guidance, as if a country were one of his milk cows, not producing as she should	DEL	
People seem not to know whether to admire him or detest him for his totalitarian ways, a benevolent dictator, if such a combination is even possible, who has achieved the illusion of unshakable national unity— <i>Latvia's sun shines equally over everyone!</i> —by clamping down on any dissenting voices, outlawing all political parties, scrapping parliament, muzzling the press	CON	Ulmanis is a character in Latvian history towards whom people feel ambivalent.
Small things, some people argue, when you consider what he has done for Latvia's economy, how well they are doing, relatively speaking, for such a small nation, and how quickly he has boosted the profile of its farmers, sold the rest of the world on the singular quality of her butter and bacon	DEL	
<i>I am remaining in my place</i> , he says, as Russian tanks ring Riga, <i>you remain in yours</i>	DEL	
A few weeks later, he is deported	CON	Ulmanis was deported and his government overthrown.
<i>New government</i> , the radio stutters	CON	
Then: <i>Welcome to the Soviet Republic!</i>	CON	Latvia is now part of the Soviet Republic.
That puts an end to summer, and now fall is approaching, but on the subject of Cesvaine, Ausma's parents are silent	DEL	
Later, she will hear a rumor that the Soviets claimed the castle after their arrival, requisitioned it for something other than classes, accommodations for officers, perhaps, important people in the Party	DEL	
She has no idea if that's true	DEL	
All she knows is that the start of the school year has come and gone, and someone is sleeping in the castle of her sister's stories, and it's not her	CON	Because of the occupation, Ausma was unable to go to school in Cesvaine.
Ghosting about the farm, she catches fragments of the adults' conversations, rough like the trimmings of the horse's hooves that her father leaves scattered on the floor of the barn for the dogs to tooth	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Collectivization, she hears her father's friends saying, and they spit the words like it's something turning in the bottom of an unwashed glass	CON	The Soviet regime interferes in every sphere of life.
Never, they say and shake their wooly heads, making the beer they grip with their chapped hands swirl and tremble	DEL	
Her father pulls down a new bottle, then another	DEL	
Disappeared, she hears another time, the whole family, no one knows where	CON	Word starts spreading about deportations.
Which is not entirely true	DEL	
Someone somewhere knows	CON	Under the Soviet regime, some people were deemed enemies and traitors.
Across the country, inside unmarked buildings, files are accumulating	DEL	
And inside these files: names	DEL	
<i>Unreliables</i>	DEL	
<i>Enemies of the people</i>	DEL	
Individuals the newly installed secret police suspect could prove <i>disruptive</i> in this time of transition and unification	DEL	
The consequence of being one whose name appears in such a file is revealed slowly at first, one person at a time, so that it's easy to convince yourself what's happening can't really be happening, easy to invent stories that somehow make more sense than what must be the truth	CON	More and people disappear without a trace.
The schoolteacher who one day doesn't show up for work	DEL	
Bent over double with a stomach gone sour? Or the minister who doesn't come to unlock the church door on Sunday	DEL	
Laid up with the gout? The newspaper editor who speaks Esperanto—on one of his binges, most likely, just give him a week and he'll resurface, split-lipped, hickeyed, memory scoured, repentant	DEL	
But as the unmarked buildings begin to fill with files, great drifting mounds of files, and one hundred people begin to disappear each month, then two hundred people, then three hundred, these absences, and are becoming harder to ignore the unspoken implications of these absences	DEL	
Soon, the loved ones of the missing no longer bother to report them missing	CON	People quietly understood what was happening.
They understand now that no one in the unmarked buildings will ever tell them whether there is a file	DEL	
Or whether the file says <i>Gulag</i>	DEL	
Or whether it says, <i>Execute by firing squad</i>	DEL	
Inside the unmarked buildings that are rapidly filling with secret files that no one will admit the existence of, the gatherers of these individual names would not mind some additional flexibility in assigning fates	DEL	
Something between a death sentence and a prison sentence	CON	The Soviets plan to exile people to Siberia.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Something like a bureaucratic order that could apply, immediately, to thousands	DEL	
For this, they begin to turn to the idea of forcible resettlement	DEL	
<i>Special exile</i>	DEL	
To designate someone a special exile is to be freed from the bother of ever staging a trial	DEL	
No need to accuse someone of a specific crime, only to imply that they fit one of twenty or so preapproved categories that are fast tracks to banishment, general enough that they could apply to almost anyone	DEL	
A government-ordered change of address that catches thousands unaware, and comes without warning	DEL	
Just a knock	DEL	
Usually in the early hours of morning	DEL	
So that you will be half- asleep, cotton-headed, slow to grasp what is happening, what it means when <i>the senior member of the operative group</i> tells you to gather everyone in your family into one room, while <i>taking all necessary precautionary measures against any possible excesses</i> , so that you can be <i>notified that upon the decision of the Government</i> you are being <i>deported to other regions of the Union</i>	DEL	
Do they give you time to pack? Do they tell you the items you are officially permitted to bring? <i>One suit</i>	DEL	
Or are you dreaming that? Do the neighbors come out to see what is happening? Are they <i>called upon to disperse to their homes</i> ? Is not a word allowed to pass between you and <i>any passersby</i> ? Would you say what is happening to you is <i>firm and decisive without the slightest pomposity, noise and panic</i> ? And once you are loaded into your designated railcar— <i>an estimated 25 persons per car should be observed</i> —can you hear the door lock?	DEL	
These are the protocols as prescribed by the Third Deputy People’s Commissar of State Security of the USSR, an exhaustive list of how-tos for those needing guidance on such subjects as the Manner of Executing Deportation, the Manner of Separating the Deportee from His Family, the Manner of Conveying the Deportees and the Manner of Embarking	DEL	
The commissar is a man named Ivan Serov, stocky, with blue-gray eyes and a knack for engineering mass exile	DEL	
Calm, deliberate, methodical, he excels at anticipating each step, right down to the moment the bolt should be thrown across the door	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He is honing his skills, perfecting his method, squinting his blue-gray eyes off into the Soviet future, when he will run the KGB	DEL	
Already, his résumé includes the recent exile of a million and a half Poles	DEL	
Tens of thousands of Crimeans, Ukrainians, gone	DEL	
Later, it will be Hungarians, teenagers mostly, thought likely to join the resistance, hustled off beneath the streets and loaded into train cars, the doors locked tight	DEL	
In Latvia, his secret police identify more than fifteen thousand candidates for a single operation of mass exile	DEL	
Several thousand from Lithuania and Estonia, too	DEL	
After months of planning, they pick a day: June 14, 1941	GEN	June 14, 1941 was the date of the first deportations.
Mostly, for this round—because the planning has already begun for another round—it's intellectuals, the political elite, soldiers, businessmen, even Boy Scouts who are targeted—and never just an individual, but their entire families	DEL	Whole families were deported for arbitrary reasons.
Jews, Russians and Poles who also call the country home	DEL	
And while the whole family is taken together, they will not stay together	CON	Then, the men are separated from the families.
The men will be sent to labor camps, the women and children to special settlements	DEL	
At least for those sent to the Gulags, there is some kind of internal infrastructure, a crude logic at work: places to sleep, however rough, regular meals, however meager	DEL	
When the special exiles are finally coaxed blinking from the boxcars that dragged them through the Urals, across the overwhelming steppes, they're simply left in the middle of nowhere, instructed to fend for themselves	DEL	
There are no daily breadlines, no fences or guard towers	DEL	
The land is so unforgiving, it forms its own prison	DEL	
Stripped of everything, carrying only what they had time to pack, the special exiles must start over again	DEL	
They must secure their own shelter	DEL	
They must feed and clothe themselves	DEL	
But even as they're left to engineer their own survival, they are also expected to help the architects of their exile	CON	The exiles were taken to wild areas and expected to work.
They are all workers now for the Soviet State	DEL	
And so, for the good of the state, they will drag saws through Russian pine, clear meadows in the summer with scythes, harvest milk from the spindly Siberian cows of the sad collective dairies, descend newt-eyed into mines	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
A pen scratched them out of existence, now it will record their every move: who reports to work, how much they saw and stack	DEL	
Exhaustion from starvation does not excuse anyone from their work	DEL	
If one can be said to be lucky in such situations, the lucky ones will be delivered to areas where, maybe, there's already a small, weathered community of existing exiles	DEL	
Descendants of tsarist-era dissidents, or more recent arrivals, those shipped to the territories in the east within the last ten years—when the Soviet Union began its early experiments in the collectivization of all farmland, and officials realized the process would go much more smoothly if they simply banished a farm's former owners rather than risk resistance	DEL	
In these settlements, where about half of the newly arrived will die in the first year, from starvation or exposure, the presence of anyone who understands what it will take to endure means you might make it	DEL	
Someone who is willing to share their crude tools, to offer a place on the floor of their dugouts, or at least to offer to barter bare necessities for whatever strange things the newcomers packed—a suit?—when they did not know what to pack	DEL	
Even better: maybe the settlement will have managed to establish a rough working collective, with a bare share of food in exchange for one's labor, a scratching of rations in the form of mealy grain, perhaps, whether offered, or pocketed	DEL	
As far as the Soviet officials are concerned, there is no downside to this arrangement: every day that the exiles can survive is another day of unanticipated labor in a region rich in resources that would otherwise go unclaimed	DEL	
And if the exiles die—and more than half of these exiles will—then, that's another problem taken care of, too	CON	The Soviet regime absolutely did not care about the lives and fates of the people.
In those early days, the story of the missing is a story they tell one another without saying a thing, the anxious transmissions of a hive mind, the entire village babbling silently to itself, as if suddenly, everyone is the old woman who can no longer remember her name, who bickers with her shadow, pitches pebbles at the sun, sucks the filth from her hands as if it's really sweets	DEL	
A list of the things they thought they saw that they did not know whether they should admit to anyone else: The farmer's wife and her children, led from their own house, their fronts still dusted from making the morning's bread	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The neighbor's cat that never crossed the threshold of the barn, that directed its wormy rump at anyone who tried to make eye contact, emerging from your peonies, jittery, dropping fleas, pleading for food	DEL	
The little man well placed in the local Party, who is now sitting on a pile of pillows, driving the buggy you could swear belonged to the blacksmith	CON	The locals who were not deported quietly observe the change.
They react like a village of strangers	DEL	
Each thinking no farther than the borders of his own life	DEL	
And in this way, dread becomes something both secret and shared.	DEL	
It trails Ausma for an anxious week, plodding just behind her, a phantom presence that makes her uneasy in a way that can't be put into words	DEL	
This is hers and hers alone, the dread of a thirteen-year-old girl	DEL	
And it follows its own logic: Because dread is a secret thing, and the future is a secret thing, now the future becomes something to dread	CON	Because of the silence and uncertainty all around, the future becomes scary.
Wake to the sound of the stars, stumble out to the cows	CON	A mindless routine is the only thing helping to survive.
Place your pail so that you can lean into their warm flanks while you work, let them steam your skin when they reach back with their noses to nudge you, testing whether you are just a fly	DEL	
Then close your eyes and half-sleep while you tug the milk from them	DEL	
Know how much you have already done by the way the pail sings	DEL	
Try not to think about how much you don't know, such as whether today could be the day that your mother is imagining when she cries from the nest that is her bed and says she wishes your sister would come home, so that whatever is going to happen, we can at least be together when it happens, and your father says, or are you dreaming, shh, let her have her life, while she can	DEL	
Bombs tell you they are coming by the sound of your brother's voice, something held together with sinew and bone, like a hand in your back, driving you underground, into the cold cellar	CON	The region and all territory of Latvia is bombed by Germans
Below the level where anything can grow, they wait, like bolted seeds	CON	
Just a week has passed since the last trains pulled away from Latvia, carrying all those thousands of unspoken names east	DEL	
And now, this is when the German troops choose to launch a surprise attack against the Russians, and claim Latvia for their own	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They send their planes to Riga first, dropping bomb after bomb, until vast sections of the city are little more than pumiced swales, steaming mounds of slag, the spaces previously occupied by buildings suggested only through negative space; when all that is left is what surrounds what is not there	DEL	
That which still manages to stand looks spun, not built	DEL	
Seen from above, it's almost possible to pretend Riga is no longer a city, but a vast flattened field where, in the cool of the early morning, before a foot or a hoof has touched the grass, hundreds of spiderwebs might suddenly appear visible to the naked eye, each spare strand latticed with dew	DEL	
Down in the cold cellar in Gulbene, in the rooted dark, they listen to the zippering shriek of the planes, and hope that Livija is also somewhere safe, wherever she might be in Riga	CON	As the bombs rain down on Latvia, the family in Gulbene does not know the fate of Livija.
The earth relays the only news they receive from the surface, dribblings of dirt and earthworm casings in patterns that communicate the concussive forces of the various forms of ordnance, antiaircraft rounds launched from the ground, bombs dropped from the skies, aerial skirmishes, hit or miss, miss or hit, near, far, near, near, far	DEL	
When, finally, they climb to the surface, they see scorched sections of road, smoldering bits of fuselage, blistered fields	DEL	
But <i>Lembi</i> still stands	GEN	<i>Lembi</i> was not harmed in the bombings
Somewhere, in the distance, a horse is screaming, whether in distress or fear, it is impossible to tell	DEL	
Next come the Russian ground troops, trailing German tank fire, the sparking cut of machine guns, their uniforms smoke-soaked, their faces furred and singed from the carbon particles released by the torches they've touched to the roofs of the farmhouses that appear on their path of retreat	CON	Retreating Russian soldiers burn everything so as not to leave anything for Germans to use.
But first, they lift all possible supplies, raid the larders, liberate equipment and horses	DEL	
Then they flint the matches	DEL	
Their goal in retreat is to leave the Germans nothing, by taking everything from the peasants	CON	
At <i>Lembi</i> , they track the path of the German advance and the Russian retreat by the graying of the sky	DEL	
The candling incandescence of the signal flares replace the regular rhythm of sunrise and sunset	DEL	
They know they lie in the path of the fighting	DEL	
They do not want to leave <i>Lembi</i> , but they also don't want to be caught in the crossfire	CON	The family hides in the forest.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
So they round up the animals, eyes rolling, trailing nervous snot, they pack the wagon as if they are never coming back, and head for a clearing, deep in the forest, where they will hide along with some of their neighbors	CON	
Days pass, no one sleeps	DEL	
That includes the animals, bleating and wheeling, tangling their leads, pissing on themselves, mouths foamy with grass and worry	DEL	
Ausma feels their lathering fear	DEL	
She works her jaw, tries to rid herself of the clenching pain that she's grown to suspect is a bad tooth	DEL	
She's rubbed her gums with the salve they make from what they find in the bees' hives, held compresses to her swelling cheek, but the pain won't break	DEL	
She sweats through her clothes, then shivers under blankets	DEL	
When she opens her eyes she is not sure if it is fever that makes her see a figure emerging from the forest	CON	Ausma has an infected tooth and a German soldier gives her medicine.
It is a German soldier, and she can't understand much of what he says	DEL	
She has been out of school for so long now that she is struggling to recall her language lessons—and soon, the Germans will requisition the school where Ausma might have gone back, if life had ever returned to normal, which it will not, the new occupying forces claiming it now for the convalescence of wounded soldiers, so that the few German words Ausma still possesses in this moment will be the extent of all she will ever learn of the language, at least formally	DEL	
The soldier is speaking directly to her, pointing to the hand she holds to her cheek	DEL	
She thinks he is asking her what's wrong, that maybe he is trying to establish whether she has been wounded	DEL	
Finally, she blurts out what she thinks is the word for <i>pain</i>	DEL	
She opens her mouth, points to her tooth	DEL	
Pain, she repeats	DEL	
The German nods, dips his hand into a supply bag	DEL	
In his palm, a pill, no bigger than a seed	DEL	
He offers it to Ausma, motions for her to place it in on her tongue	DEL	
She swallows it without water	DEL	
And almost immediately, the pain is gone	DEL	
Someone translates: the German soldier is telling everyone that they can go back to their farms now—the fighting is over	CON	Fighting has stopped and the family goes back to the farm.
The Russians are defeated, and the country has been <i>liberated</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She looks at this soldier who has just shown her this kindness, however small	DEL	
Later, she will hesitate remembering the moment, a grave misreading of right and wrong that she otherwise would not have regarded herself capable of, but this is what she thinks, in that moment, in the dark of the woods, the pain momentarily leaving her: maybe life will be better now with the Germans	CON	For some time, Germans occupy Latvia and Ausma wants to believe that life may be better.

CHAPTER 12

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The grandfather of my memories strips down to his white undershirt, the elastic braces on his pants still hitched up over his bare shoulders	DEL	
I watch— maybe four years old—as he stands before the old bathroom mirror, clouded as a cataract, holding his left eye in one hand	CON	Emils had one glass eye.
Careful not to drop the eye in the basin or on the floor where the glass could chip, he runs it under the tap, rinsing it with a gentle stream of warm water	DEL	
When he is finished, he uses his free hand to pry the skin around his left eye wide, and for an instant, the cavity carved more than thirty years ago by the Russian soldier's bullet is visible	CON	Emils lost his eye in war.
Then, with a muffled pop, he wedges the eye back into its socket	DEL	
He is always trying not to think about the last image that he saw with both eyes	DEL	
If only it had been his wife, and the pale down on her post-childbirth belly, still stretched to fit the shape of their first son, conceived four months before he received his orders to the front	DEL	
Or the view from their apartment, where he used to lie with her in the days before the war, the two of them on the narrow bed, knowing what was just beyond the window, the tramline, and the cemetery just beyond that, the graves overgrown and unmarked, dating back to the days of the plague, when bodies could not be buried within five miles of Riga's old center for fear of contagion	DEL	
Or even a formula, drawn on the chalkboard, back when he still taught economics— $AFC + AVC$ , or maybe, $MV = PT$ —white dusting the hairs of his knuckles on his writing hand, round glasses sliding down his nose	DEL	
The bullet pierces the metal bridge of his glasses first	DEL	
The eye is gone before he even registers the loss	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Initially, there is no pain, only the sound of his boots on packed earth as he staggers back through the trenches, over bodies, toward someone who might help	DEL	
For the past few days, they have been counting rounds, watching their munitions slowly disappear shot by shot, wondering, bellies to the ground, when the forest will stop firing at them	DEL	
They have laid a clutch of mines at the edge of the trees and strung a fence of barbed wire that spasms with each blast	DEL	
But they know that none of this will be enough to hold back the gathering Russian troops, who outnumber them ten to one	DEL	
What matters now is not whether they can defend this line, but for how long	DEL	
They are all that is left to keep the Russian army from advancing on the capital, eighty kilometers away	GEN	Emils was fighting in the front line, protecting Riga.
The calculus at work is desperate, simple: each additional moment they can absorb the Russian onslaught gives someone in Riga the chance to flee, and all the soldiers seem to have someone in Riga, including him	GEN	The longer they keep the Russians off, the more civilians can escape the city.
What is left then but to load his remaining rounds, and hope that this is what she is doing, running, that she does not stop, there is no time for hesitation	DEL	
There is only time for her to sweep up their two children and leave	DEL	
Leave it all: the window and the narrow bed	DEL	
Leave everything, including him	DEL	
They run out of ammunition on the second day of fighting	DEL	
The blood has churned the dirt of the trenches to mud in places	DEL	
He still has a grenade, his pistol	DEL	
The silence in the forest, the sound of his own breath, should tell my grandfather that the Russians are on the move, slipping under the barbed wire, creeping toward the ten-kilometer-long trench that has sheltered the Latvian troops	DEL	
Soon, they are skittering over the lip like spiders	DEL	
For the next two days, they fight with their hands, with whatever is at hand, the narrow passageways of the trenches breached, overrun	DEL	
There is always a press of the enemy's brown uniforms, emerging ahead of you, or behind you, guns drawn	DEL	
The moment will come when your back is turned, and they are nearly upon you	DEL	
And something, a twitch, a mote, a flicker of red from a uniform collar, snags on my grandfather's consciousness	DEL	
And the pin is out before he can even think	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And now the grenade is wheeling from his hand toward the Russian soldiers, their turned backs, feet digging into dirt for purchase, as they try to flee		
And now he is running through the smoke, and the black and the ash of what remains, running in the direction of their retreat, pushing deeper and deeper into the trench after them	DEL	
The man with the gun is just around the corner	DEL	
They surprise each other	DEL	
It is an officer, a Russian captain, identifiable by the leather belt cinched at his waist	CON	A Russian officer shot Emils.
And clipped to that, the empty holster from which his pistol has already been withdrawn, hammer back	DEL	
Together, they fire	DEL	
This will be the last thing my grandfather sees with both eyes	GEN	The last thing Emils sees with his own eyes is war.
As he squeezes the trigger of his pistol, he turns his face away, toward the packed earth walls that surround him	DEL	
He was conscripted, that was all he would say about his time in the war	DEL	
Conscripted into the Latvian Legion	ZERO	Emils said he fought as part of the Latvian Legion.
And that is all true, but the longer I remain in Latvia, the more clearly I can see that there are some truths that can become more damaging than any lie	DEL	
Truths built from omission	DEL	
When my grandfather fought that day in the battle in which he lost his eye, it is true that he fought as a conscript of the Latvian Legion	DEL	
But it is also true that technically, even as someone who was drafted into the legion, and not a volunteer, he fought for Germany	CON	Technically, Emils fought as part of the Nazi army.
He wore a German uniform	DEL	
It is also true that within the structure of the Nazi military, the legion was classified as a formation within the Waffen SS, even though, as members of one of the several ethnic legions established in countries occupied by Germany during the war, they were not considered by the Nazis to be <i>genuine</i> SS, more like cannon fodder for the front lines	DEL	
These are the things I know now	DEL	
Things I did not know then	DEL	
But because my grandfather never spoke of the war and his part in it, I had always sensed, even as a child, that it must have been a source of tremendous guilt and shame, a suffering so awful that he did not want to think about it	CON	Emils never spoke of his experience during the war because of the terror he endured and inflicted.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And yet, as he silently rocked and shook and cried in his chair in front of the TV, the sound blaring, an old man, liver-spotted, fragile-boned, it was clear he could not block the memories of what he had seen when he still possessed two good eyes	CON	Emils had severe emotional traumas from the war.
In goes the eye	DEL	
And it's July 1, 1941	DEL	
The day the one army retreats from Latvia, taking with it its hammers and sickles, and Serov's NKVD officers and their thousands upon thousands of secrets, some of which will soon be unearthed from mass graves beneath the prison where everyone suspected the disappeared were taken and questioned	CON	In 1941, the Russian occupation is overtaken by German occupation of Latvia.
Other secrets—specifically the more than fifteen thousand now just two weeks into their journeys east, still locked in their train cars, but already dying—will remain, a bewildering and unresolved haunting of horror, confusion and rage	DEL	
And another army enters, readying swastikas and yellow stars	DEL	
Briefly, the country's national anthem warbles over the radio	DEL	
And then, as the German tanks roll into Riga's center, the radio begins broadcasting a new call to loyalty: those interested in volunteering for a special branch of the <i>auxiliary police</i> to rid Latvia of <i>traitors</i> , including Communists and Jews, should report at once to the headquarters being established in Krisjana Valdemara Street, quarters <i>requisitioned</i> from a local Jewish banker	CON	In Latvia as well, the Nazi carried out Jewish genocide.
Even today, some Latvians say that it wasn't until after the German troops arrived that the savagery began, that it was their presence which began to turn something in people, but that version of events would mean ignoring the women who, on July 1, 1941, have just appeared on Riga's main boulevard dressed in folk costumes, braids bouncing, as they offer bites of bread and shots of vodka and their upturned mouths to the incoming SS officers	DEL	
It would mean ignoring the men, speaking Latvian to one another, who have gathered down in the basement of the banker's former home on Krisjana Valdemara Street, securing plastic sheeting to the walls, something to catch the anticipated sprays of blood	CON	Latvians also helped in the murders of the Jewish.
It would mean ignoring the line of volunteers that has already formed outside the building with its plastic-sheeted basement, hundreds by one estimate, many wearing the colors of the fraternities from the University of Latvia, where my grandfather teaches	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
It would mean turning our eyes away from the Jewish man who is being beaten by men in suits, as if they have just stepped away from their desks, at the feet of a statue of the writer Rudolfs Blaumanis—the author of the novel <i>In the Lap of Happiness</i> —in broad daylight, in one of the city’s busiest parks	CON	
Within twenty-four hours, Riga’s major newspapers publish the following notices: Jews must surrender all property; they may no longer ride on public transportation or use sidewalks; they may not own radios; they may no longer stand in any lines and must only shop in places where there are no lines	CON	Immediately after the German occupation of Riga, the terror against the Jewish begins.
That night, men wearing armbands in the colors of the Latvian flag roam the city, going door to door, looking for all Jewish residents	CON	Latvians actively participate in the locating and attacking of Jews.
Many landlords are happy to direct them to the proper apartments	DEL	
Once the doors open, the beatings begin, then lootings, and finally, <i>arrests</i>	DEL	
The prisoners are marched in columns down the streets of Riga to the headquarters on Valdemara Street, where they are then led to the basement, but not before they are stripped of all valuables, rings and watches, which their jailers take a moment to enter into a ledger, then slip onto their own fingers and wrists	DEL	
Within forty-eight hours, men are digging pits in the forests just outside Riga, making them deep enough to hold thousands of dead	CON	In forests near Riga mass graves are dug for the Jewish.
With seventy-two hours, smoke chokes the city as its synagogues burn	DEL	
Trapped congregants pound on doors that have been locked from the outside by young men who stand guard to make sure no one escapes	DEL	
Some people try to exit through the windows, but the men surround anyone who makes it to the street	DEL	
They bludgeon the escapees with the butt ends of guns	DEL	
Meanwhile, out in the forests, in the dark, the first wave of prisoners is pushed toward the edge of the pits	CON	
A firing squad of ten stands on the other side	DEL	
After they unload all their bullets, a man with a machine gun roams the edge of the pit, looking for any survivors, then gives the signal for the diggers to cover it all back up	DEL	
Out in the countryside, the reaction has been just as fierce and swift	ZERO	Out in the countryside, the reaction has been just as fierce and swift
In Gulbene, my grandmother’s region of Latvia, census takers, in the years just before the war, recorded the number of Jewish residents to be 84	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
But within days of the German troops' arrival, every single one of them has vanished, rounded up by soldiers, directed by the local police, who know where everyone lives	DEL	
Then they are taken to the local train station, where they are held in outbuildings, until the day the blue buses arrive	DEL	
The blue buses come from Riga, requisitioned from the city's fleet, filled with the volunteers who have perfected their methods in the forest killings and synagogue burnings and basement tortures	DEL	
They meet the train carrying Gulbene's Jews about twenty kilometers from the village, then lead the men and women and children to a former army shooting range, where they are slaughtered four at a time, their bodies dumped in a single mass grave	CON	Near Gulbene, Jews are also slaughtered and thrown in mass graves.
When the Nazis first marched into Latvia, there were an estimated 70,000 Jews living in the country	DEL	
Just three months later, a status report is sent to commanders in Germany	DEL	
On a map of Latvia, there is a coffin	DEL	
Above it is written the number 35,238	DEL	
It is October 1941	CON	
That month, my grandparents conceive their first child	CON	As the Jewish genocide takes place in Riga, Inara's grandparents attempt to live a normal life.
A month later, they marry	CON	
By then, nearly every remaining Jew in Latvia will have been murdered	DEL	
I have not found evidence that my grandfather was a participant in the atrocities that took place in Riga, or the Latvian countryside, or that he condoned them	GEN	Inara has no evidence that Emils took part in the genocide.
But there is his silence	DEL	
It is impossible to imagine that he did not witness what was happening throughout the city, that anyone who lived in Riga at that time could not have seen the smoke and smelled the fires; the neighboring apartments, suddenly empty; the columns of men and women and children being marched down Freedom Street at gunpoint; the barbed wire cordoning off a twelve-square-block section of the city, with a sign outside, in both German and Latvian that reads <i>Persons who climb the fence or attempt to communicate with ghetto inhabitants through the fence will be shot on sight</i>	DEL	
The trains arriving every day, delivering Jews from other countries to the ghetto	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And yet, the outlines of his life in 1941 suggest that my grandfather is trying to live as if none of this is happening, as if he is trying to make his presence smaller and smaller, so that no one will notice him pretending not to notice	CON	It appears, that Emils tried to have a normal life going to and from work in the face of the terror going on.
Each morning, he rises and waits for the tram	DEL	
He goes to his job at the textile factory, and balances the books	DEL	
At night, he teaches, he stands at the chalkboard, he writes, he erases, he takes the streetcar home	DEL	
He slides under the blankets next to my grandmother, who moves his hand to meet their baby's kick	DEL	
In July 1942, nearly one year to the day the Nazis arrived in Riga, she tells him it is time	GEN	In 1942, Livija and Emils welcome their firstborn, daughter Maruta.
The baby has dark hair, thick and unruly, like her father's	DEL	
They name her Maruta	DEL	
He buys a camera, holds it up to his eye, fixing her in the viewfinder: such a tiny thing tucked in the crook of her mother's arm, sucking the folds of fabric that wrap her	DEL	
But while that camera is pressed against his eye: the German high command is fretting over its losses	CON	At the same time, Germany is losing its position in Latvia.
They are hemorrhaging soldiers, losing ground to the Russians	DEL	
They managed to recruit several hundred Latvian volunteers without any trouble	DEL	
Then they formed a separate unit they called the Latvian Legion, hoping to appeal to Latvian nationalism by giving them their own division, commanded by their own officers	DEL	
But that's still given them nowhere near enough bodies	DEL	
As talk begins of a mandatory induction, my grandparents bundle baby Maruta, just ten months old, and take a train from the city to spend a few days at <i>Lembi</i> , as if a country retreat might let them pretend that there is a parallel universe from the one unfolding in Riga	CON	As the situation becomes more volatile, Livija and Emils go to <i>Lembi</i> .
Where her uncle will hoist her onto the back of a bored plow horse flicking its tail at her kicks as if they were little more than the touch of settling flies	DEL	
And where her aunt Ausma, just fourteen, can hold her and sing to her and let her lick sweet batter from her fingers while Livija sleeps	DEL	
Maybe it is moments like this that convince my grandfather over the next six months, following that visit to <i>Lembi</i> , that he can go on pretending indefinitely, blocking out the truth of what is happening all around him, and his place in it, especially when his birthday falls just outside the first induction order, issued at the end of 1943	CON	Having visited <i>Lembi</i> , Livija and Emils feel a false sense of security that they will be able to have a normal life.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
That month my grandfather Emils and my grandmother Livija conceive their second child, my father	DEL	
No one reads the newspapers in Riga anymore for news	DEL	
In fact, most people have forgotten what news looks like, what it was to read about the yearly accumulation of rainfall, or the health of the national rye crop, or a review of a performance of Verdi's <i>Aīda</i> at the Opera House, or a report on the annual gathering of regional folklorists	DEL	
Instead, the papers carry statements, proclamations, polemics, bulleted items now preceded by the word <i>WARNING</i>	CON	As the war progresses in Europe, life becomes less and less normal.
In late March 1944, my grandfather's conscription order arrives	CON	Emils, along with many other men, is called in to join the army.
His brother-in-law, my grandmother's brother, Janis, has already received his call-up	CON	Livija's brother Janis has also been conscripted.
Not long after my grandfather's order arrives, the following appears in one of the city's newspapers, under the words <i>FINAL WARNING</i> : Unconscious citizens who refrain from fulfilling their responsibility to their nation at this decisive moment and have not heeded the instructions will not be able to live unaffected	DEL	
Sooner or later they will receive the punishment they deserve	DEL	
There are men who resist, who take to the forests, who run	GEN	Some men try to escape their war duty.
But most, like my grandfather, choose to accept their call-up	DEL	
Some of the men say it does not matter what uniform they wear, they are not fighting for the Germans, they are fighting to protect Latvia, fighting against the Soviets—and when they defeat them, they will turn against the Germans	CON	Even though Latvians tried to rationalize it, they were fighting in the Nazi army.
Still, when they pull the army-issued tunics over their heads, the elbows hollowed to fit the shape of their previous owners, how can they deny the SS bolts at the collars?	DEL	
At his induction, my grandfather and his fellow conscripts repeat the following: <i>I swear by God this holy oath that in the struggle against Bolshevism I will give the Commander in Chief of the German Armed Forces, Adolf Hitler, absolute obedience and as a brave soldier I will always be ready to lay down my life for this oath</i>	CON	Upon induction, Emils and other Latvian soldiers swore obedience to Hitler.
At home, on his last leave, he raises the camera once more: Maruta, her hair dark as a rook's wing, plump-legged like a pony, given, alternately, to gumming a toy dog or closing her eyes against the winter-thinned sunlight	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
These are the last images of the family, together in Latvia, and even though my father is not yet present, he is already there with them, cells dividing, multiplying, an unseen partner in the moments unfolding	CON	On his last days before active war duty, Emils takes photographs of his family.
My grandfather is largely absent from the record of these last days, as if he has already started to hold himself apart, choosing instead to control their framing, lingering on images of mother and child, using the several seconds' stillness required to take a photograph with his old camera as an excuse to memorize their features: Maruta's tiny ears, whorled and vulnerable, like snails unshelled; her first milk teeth, fluttering at the edge of lips callused from breast-feeding; the lines that appear around the edges of his wife's eyes when she smiles, soft like the creases traced in the dirt after a sudden rain; the base of her neck, the way it hollows when she looks down to admire the girl in her lap	DEL	
Only a few times, he crosses over to join that life inside the frame: his hands, large and rigid as garden spades, gloved in leather, military issue, Maruta's twig-fingers lost in his grip as he helps her take her first toeing steps	DEL	
He is assigned to combat on the eastern front, where Latvia borders Russia	DEL	
They go without training, with hand-me-down guns and severe shortages of supplies	CON	Emils' division is undertrained and undersupplied.
According to a report from the colonel who headed my grandfather's division: Of the 536 horses we were promised, we received only 85, 5 of which were lame, of the estimated 15 light vehicles there were only 2; of the estimated 18 heavy vehicles, only 2	DEL	
The soldiers received nothing to drink out of or any eating utensils	DEL	
This is how my grandfather will spend the next six months, with dwindling ammunition, under heavy attack, each day bringing him closer to the battle that will claim his eye	DEL	
The soldiers know before anyone has to tell them: this is a retreat	DEL	
What is left of my grandfather's division crosses back into Latvia at the end of July, and suddenly my grandfather is marching through the countryside where he was raised, past farms and barns and horses too old to be afraid of the bombs; past the turnoff for Cesvaine, where he and my grandmother first met; past the former army shooting range, and the unmarked mass grave that holds the bodies of every Jew who once called this area home, too	CON	As the army retreats, Emils walks through the countryside he grew up in.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He is marching past houses emptied of all life, the inhabitants off to forests to try to hide from the mortar bursts	DEL	
One of my grandfather's fellow soldiers, whose job it is to collect the wounded and dying, checks each abandoned house for pillows, which he confiscates so that after he has given each man a gulp of cognac, the only analgesic left, he has something soft to place under their heads	CON	The soldiers search the abandoned houses for something that would help them survive.
By the time my grandfather reaches the site of the battle that will take his eye, his son will have been born	CON	While Emils is at war, Livija gives birth to their son, Inara's father.
Maybe my grandfather knows	DEL	
Maybe this is why he and the others do what they do, digging in, facing the onslaught, knowing that their ammunition will not last, that this is likely their end	CON	
There are some Latvian historians who say that the battle in which my grandfather was wounded was critical in giving tens of thousands of refugees like my grandmother time to flee the final violent tremors of the war as it played out in Latvia	DEL	It can be considered that because of Emils continuous fight in the trenches, Livija could escape.
A sacrifice, they call it	DEL	
But the word for <i>sacrifice</i> in Latvian can also mean victim, casualty	DEL	
There are other historians who say that it can never matter why a person fought with the Germans, whether or not their service was mandatory, whether or not they say they only ever served on the Russian front, whether or not they insist that their actions were never meant to help the Reich, but simply, to defend the idea of their former nation, their own families against Bolshevism	DEL	
Because every day that you helped delay the advance of anyone who was on the side of the Allies, was another day you helped delay the end of the war	DEL	
And each day you delayed the end of the war was another day you gave the Nazis time to commit additional war crimes	DEL	
All those years, as I watched my grandfather convulse and cry in silent agony, I never once considered that maybe he hurt so badly not because of the wounds he received that day, but because he had not died	CON	Inara suspects that Emils felt shame for taking part in war and feels guilty that he survived.
Instead, he woke up in a field hospital, stripped of his uniform, his head bandaged, the chart at his feet noting the extent of the damage that is caused by a single bullet as it enters the eye socket, passes through the impossibly small pocket of space between brain and skull and exits just behind the ear	CON	Emils miraculously survived.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Deep in the barn, a cow pushes, water breaks upon straw	GEN	In Ausma and Harijs's barn, a cow gives birth to twins.
The first hoof emerges, then another, one calf drops, then another, twins	DEL	
Their birth-slick bodies steaming in the gloom of the barn	DEL	
Their mother licks them clean of blood and shit and afterbirth with her bark-rough tongue	DEL	
Her teats are emptied, and the barn cats shoot from their dens in the hay to fight over the splashes	DEL	
Some of her milk is set aside for the babies, but some goes to those who care for them, too	DEL	
First milk, the farmers call it, thick like blood, the color of a lily's stamen	DEL	
Ausma decides we will use it to make bread, so sweet there's no call for sugar, so thick it needs nothing else to bind the flour	CON	
The radio is playing	DEL	
Ausma sings along: <i>Oh my beautiful youth, come back to me</i>	DEL	
She hands me her rolling pin, so I can take a turn at the dough	DEL	
What was it like for my sister, after she left us, during the war? Ausma asks suddenly	CON	While making bread from first milk, Ausma asks Inara about Livija.
Harijs, who has come in to get a glass of water, overhears Ausma's question	DEL	
Do you know how many times I should have died? he says	CON	Sensing difficult conversation, Harijs again offers his stories.
Shh! Ausma says	DEL	
Not now with that! I want to know this	DEL	
Did you come here from America by airplane or by boat? Harijs tries again	DEL	
You! says Ausma, don't interrupt	DEL	
Don't you have something to do outside?	DEL	
In America, Harijs tries one last time, do you have the same sky?	CON	
This time, Ausma looks at me, too	DEL	
My grandmother always told me it was different, I say	CON	Inara shares that Latvian sky feels different than American
And now that I'm here, I can see she was right	CON	
What's different? asks Ausma	DEL	
The clouds feel closer here	DEL	
Like you can touch them as they drift by	DEL	
I always used to think the sky was the same sky, wherever you went, Ausma says	DEL	
But your grandmother wrote the same thing to me once: <i>All I want is to see Latvia's sky one more time before I die</i>	CON	Livija dreamt to see Latvia's sky when she was abroad.
This was when she was in the camps, I think	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
A letter that reached us years later, after she had already made it to America, and we had come back from Siberia	DEL	
Ausma returns to working the dough, as if she is done with the conversation, but I can tell by the force with which she uses the heel of her hand to fold it, then fold it again, that she is thinking about something, turning it over in her head	DEL	
What I mean is, were the camps really so bad? she says at last	CON	Ausma reveals that she feels like Livija had it easier than her and the family.
Maybe they had dysentery	DEL	
But she had a place to sleep and food	CON	
It couldn't have been anything like what we had to live through	CON	
All of it	DEL	
The war	DEL	
Then my father's death	DEL	
Me having to run the farm, all by myself	DEL	
Then being sent away	DEL	
She left me alone to carry the weight of it all—just a child	DEL	
She was spared from the worst of it	DEL	
Wasn't she?	DEL	
She is the only person to hold my father following his birth	CON	Emils is not present when Livija had their son.
He does not feel his own father's touch	DEL	
<i>Soldier</i> , she writes on the necessary paperwork, when asked her husband's occupation, and signs whatever needs signing by herself	DEL	
Whether my grandmother believes then that to bear this alone is simply a temporary condition, soon to be remedied by a miraculous resolution to the war, in which her husband emerges not only unscathed but also unaccountable for having fought in an army under fascist command; or if she has begun to suspect, based on the whispered news of overwhelmed troops, breached borders and orders of retreat, that it is to be the new life to which she must become accustomed, she never utters her thoughts on this aloud	DEL	
My father is born as Russian aircraft hurl fire down on the German troops hunkered down in the marshlands surrounding Riga, their guns tating against the bellies of the big, wailing planes that are known to their own soldiers as hunchbacks	DEL	
Massive, lumbering things, bulge-eyed, narrow-snouted, said by Stalin to be as essential as air and bread	DEL	
As this due date had approached, Livija asked her sister to come to Riga to help her	ZERO	As this due date had approached, Livija asked her sister to come to Riga to help her.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
But then word came that all civilian rail service within the country had stopped	DEL	
Then the phones no longer sang, and when lifted from their cradles, screamed a silence louder than the sound of the planes horneting overhead	CON	Ausma was unable to come to Riga, because trains were stopped.
When it is time, she turns to a friend—a fellow accountant at the bacon export factory where my grandmother works	DEL	
She comes to look after Maruta while my grandmother is in the maternity ward	CON	As Livija is alone in the city, her friend Liene helps.
Her name is Liene, a diminutive of the English name Helen	CON	
She is a single woman, with no family	DEL	
The time has passed for her to have children of her own	DEL	
And this may be the start of it, a plan, building like the contractions that will send my grandmother outside to catch the streetcar to the maternity ward housed in a building in downtown Riga that will one day house the Soviet secret police	DEL	
Maybe Livija is the one who asks	DEL	
Maybe Liene asks, once she has spent time caring for two-year-old Maruta	DEL	
Either way, a decision is made, whatever happens next, it will happen with Liene's help	DEL	
The Soviets are encircling the city	DEL	
Outside my grandmother's apartment on Peace Street, the bombs wail day and night, matching the pitch of the baby's cries	GEN	The street Livija lives on is being bombarded.
As my grandmother tries to get him to latch, Liene offers to bring my grandmother food, whatever she can find or trade	DEL	
The only other people on the streets seem to be refugees, column after column, bent backs dusted with ash	GEN	Refugees from burned down villages wander the city.
At night the refugees' cook-fires burn in the city's parks and cemeteries	DEL	
Through the radio, word comes of each new town taken	DEL	
Liepaja, Jelgava, Tukums, where it is said, people are flayed alive, women raped, a man's hand severed from his wrist by a Russian soldier who wanted his watch (in every town, there are stories of Russians killing for watches, so that it grows unclear whether we are talking about actual theft, or simply repeating a parable about the destruction of order, of certainty, of all previously agreed upon references)	DEL	
Officers of the Reich can be seen racewalking Riga's narrow streets toward the port, where they descend gangplanks of ships bound back to Deutschland	CON	
The radio soothes— <i>avoid panic</i> —as the city flares	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Soon the refugees' animals begin to disappear, reduced to nothing more than smears of fat, gristled bones	DEL	
Then the refugees disappear, too	DEL	
Some are down at the docks, begging for a spot on any departing boat		
No room, they're told	DEL	
That's because others are already on board, rounded up against their will by Riga's police, who are under order to find all able-bodied men and women who can be sent to the Reich to help try to reverse the course of the war, whether they want to or not	DEL	
In the forests outside Riga, soldiers order the few Jewish prisoners not yet murdered to shove the lips of their shovels deep into the earth to exhume the bodies of those who have already been slaughtered	DEL	
And then they make them burn the corpses, before they themselves are shot	DEL	
From the middle of September onward, Riga is bombed every night	DEL	
No one sleeps	DEL	
Or if they do, they sleep cocooned in clothing, shoes against the sheets, so that they are ready to run	DEL	
Maybe it is when the Germans girdle two of the bridges leading into Riga with explosives—what is a bridge if not the promise of passage—or maybe she has heard that soon they will start slipping mines into the waters around the port, but now leaving is all Livija can think about	DEL	
No matter what she chooses—to stay or to go—it will only promise more uncertainty	DEL	
In the end, my grandmother chooses an uncertainty that she hopes, at least for the moment, will deliver her, and the children, from the immediate threat of violence	CON	As the bombarding continues, Livija decides to flee with her children
Out on the street, her friend Liene waits, pale eyes stinging for the smoke, one more set of hands for the babies	GEN	Livija's friend Liene is on the road with them.
They attempt to board a boat out of Riga, jostled up the gangplank by the parade of groaning bags, swaddled bodies, layered not against cold, but to maximize the number of clothes one might carry, coats clinking, hems heavy with coin, fur stoles circling necks and shoulders like life rings	DEL	
In the pocket of my grandmother's coat, the photos my grandfather has taken, freed from their albums to take up less space, a jumble now of baby, baby and sow, baby and switch, baby on horse, baby and mother, baby and father, now the mother on her own, seen not as parent, but as lover, face framed by the gentle V in a vase of fresh-cut pussy willows, her close-lipped smile coded, charged	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They make it as far as the deck, but then are ushered off again to make room for retreating German troops	CON	Livija and Liene depart Riga on a boat.
On the shore, they stand, numb, watching the boat's departure	DEL	
We can imagine from our own safe distance the water roiling in the ship's wake, like the surface of a pot left to boil too long	DEL	
And then the familiar drone from the skies, a blink, and the sea explodes	DEL	
When they look again, the plane is gone, the boat is gone, the water still	DEL	
Years later, long after she is dead, and after I have begun my trips to her lost village, in a satchel tucked in the far corner of my grandmother's closet, I will find a ticket granting passage to a boat departing Riga's harbor on that day	DEL	
I will never be able to determine whether this is the ticket for the lost ship that almost carried her, or if it was for the ticket of the boat she eventually boarded, and which ultimately spirited her from Latvia	DEL	
Eventually, and it will take a long time, I will realize that it does not matter	DEL	
Either way, its presence serves to establish the same proof, and that is not of the idea of proof in the definite sense—that which is clear and determined and fathomable—but rather proof of all that can be explained only by random happenstance, a slight hesitation, a pause, a retraction, a stupid doubling back, action that unfolds without regard to intent; that there is nothing to your survival more grand than the ship you took, or did not take, that your claim on life is as thin as this ticket, the edges worried, shiny with the oils of her hand, as if she had taken it out and looked at it again and again	DEL	
What did she see once they made land, and began to walk, trying to make their way west? Hundreds of thousands of other people were doing the same: the displaced, deserters, war criminals, their intended victims who had managed to resist, to escape, all walking as one limping mass through the carnage	CON	Hundreds of thousands of people fled at that time.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Likely she saw versions of what other people saw or said they saw: a teenage girl who stopped the flapping of her shrapnel-studded scalp with her last bobby pin; the man forced to slit the throat of his horse after it dropped to knees, as if its legs were broken at the fetlocks, and refused to rise, only to find moments later, strangers setting upon the steaming carcass with knives; the clots of smoke that hung over villages, the burning of unearthed bodies, the German troops and their local collaborators trying to erase all evidence of their killings; the silence of those who witnessed this, but never spoke of what they knew, trying to erase what they had not done; women, traveling alone, regardless of age, forced behind barns, into roadside copses by men in uniform, emerging, the backs of their skirts bloodied	CON	The time of Livija's flight was a time of lawlessness and incredible violence.
While alive, she chose to skip over this part of her trek, traveled it by way of omission, winding narrative detours	GEN	Livija did not talk about the violence later in her life.
She told instead a few choice stories that reinforced chance, close calls	DEL	
Close calls imply lack of agency	DEL	
Lack of agency implies that you were powerless to react to what you saw	DEL	
She would limit her account to statements such as: <i>We slept in the woods during the day, and tried to keep the children quiet</i>	CON	Liene, Livija and her children hid from soldiers in the forest.
<i>Then we would walk at night</i>	DEL	
<i>Why? We did not want the soldiers to see us</i>	DEL	
That's all she would say	DEL	
<i>Sometimes they would come close, and once I thought they would see the diapers we had put on the branches to dry, and I thought that was it, but they walked past us</i>	DEL	
In death, there is less circumspection, scraps of paper that do the talking for her, books that suddenly announce their presence in cabinets scanned a hundred times, and when their spines are cracked, reveal select pages dog-eared by her silent hand	DEL	
Old tickets unslip themselves from hidden wallet sleeves	DEL	
These clues weave with the words she left, filling in some of the blank spaces on the map of her trek across Europe, the nine months she spent walking through territories that remained contested, territories where the last chaotic days of the war would unfold	DEL	
She mentioned once that she and Liene tried to follow the rail tracks, a common route for Europe's displaced at the time, one of the last intact paths that one could trace through the flattened landscape	DEL	To move forward, Liene and Livija walked along rail tracks.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Sometimes, when they did not think they could walk another step, they tried to hop boxcars, Liene climbing first, Livija handing her the children, then clamoring after	DEL	
They looked for farms, she told me, especially in winter, wisps of smoke, a chained cow	DEL	In the winter, they looked to stay in some farms offering to work.
Sometimes, as soon as they could stop, they would hop down and double back	DEL	
Cows meant they might be able to offer their help as milkers in exchange for something to eat, or even just a spare cup dipped in the pails for the children	DEL	
Even when they did not understand what my grandmother was saying, the farmers recognized her hands	DEL	
Usually, though, my grandmother let Liene talk, or if they could not be sure it was safe, she would wait in the bushes while Liene went ahead on reconnaissance	CON	Liene knew German, so she was the one to talk and ask for help.
Liene spoke perfect German and so she could offer a cover, if needed, could pretend to be local	DEL	
Sometimes a farmer might let Livija and Liene and the children stay a few nights in the barn, and, briefly, there were times, nestled in the hay, feeling the children's breath prick her neck, she might allow herself for a second to remember Gulbene, sleeping in the loft on the summer's hottest nights, each poke and scratch of the straw beneath her that released a smell like cobwebs in sunlight	DEL	
They woke to tendriled breath, the crackling of frost underfoot	DEL	
When it was time to move on, they buttoned the children inside their coats, and hipped them through the wind	CON	They walked in winter, at all costs trying to keep the children warm.
Ice rimed the puddles	DEL	
They cracked it with their toes, dragged graying diapers through the slurry, and as they had done back home, hanging laundry outside, even in the dead of Latvia's winters, they waited for the fabric to freeze into stiff sheets—their signal that all the water had evaporated and the clothing was, in fact, dry	DEL	
When the baby boy cried because Livija had less milk for him than he knew there should be, Liene was the one who took him and bounced him, tried to soothe away hunger with silly songs	CON	Liene was of huge help with the kids, playing with them and taking care of them.
With her fingers, in forest light, under the cover of birdsong, she combed Maruta's rook-wing hair	DEL	
For the children of Latvia, with its unceasing history of occupations and wars, famine and servitude, parents were forever being snatched away, and the old myths were full of stories of the role of the surrogate	CON	Latvian folk stories are full of the role of surrogate because children lost their parents so often due to crises.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
<i>Titmouse, chaffinch, where are your children?— Over on the other side of the Daugava, In the branch of an oak</i>	DEL	
<i>But who rocks them? Who raises them?—Mother Wind rocks them</i>	DEL	
<i>Mother Wind raises them</i>	DEL	
Apple trees were said to be mothers to those who had none	DEL	
Beneath their boughs lonely girls could go and feel the soft fall of petals as an acknowledgement of their tears	DEL	
But what of the women, like Liene, who wanted to be mothers, but could not have children of their own? She spent nine months on the road with my father and my aunt, as long as if she could have carried her own baby to term, and she felt each child grow heavier in her arms	CON	During their flight together, Liene, barren, was a second mother to Livija's children and could experience motherhood.
She watched my father's features change from the squinting, blurry outlines of an infant to someone solid, intense, heavy-browed	DEL	
He locked eyes with her, smiled at the sound of her voice	DEL	
He was also growing harder to hold	DEL	
He kicked, threw back his head, as if trying to make eye contact with the pilots in the planes always screaming overhead	DEL	
The boy wanted to crawl, but they had to keep moving	DEL	
The women tried to stay away from the cities, the bloated carcasses trapped in the rubble, the flies, the detached hooves and scraps of hides turning sweet water sour, the living shitting uncontrollably	DEL	
Livija and Liene said they were tempted to stop only once, after they heard a rumor that they should try a city a bit farther to the east, where the train station had been turned over to refugees	DEL	
Liene went ahead to look, while my grandmother and the children waited	DEL	
When Liene finally returned the next morning, she described the scene: the stench of the diesel engines, sulfur, the unwashed	DEL	
Hundreds of people crammed onto the platforms, stowed in storage areas, like luggage, lying in the basement	DEL	
There was absolutely no room, she said	DEL	
Then we keep moving, Livija said	DEL	
Later that night, when they stopped to look in the direction of where they had just been, when they looked back toward Dresden, they saw fire where there should have been sky	DEL	
They continued, slowly, to work their way north, tracing an arcing path clockwise, toward the sea, stopping first at Lübeck, then moving on to a DP camp in Pinneberg, on the outskirts of Hamburg	CON	Eventually, Liene and Livija reached a refugee camp near Hamburg.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They stayed together as long as they could	ZERO	They stayed together as long as they could
But, eventually, Liene left—among the first refugees to be offered a chance to emigrate, in her case to England	CON	They separated when Liene emigrated to England.
Reluctantly, she left my grandmother and the children behind	DEL	
She moved to London and married another Latvian refugee, a maker of traditional jewelry	DEL	
Decades later, when my father remarried, Liene’s husband gave my stepmother a silver ring bearing a cascade of charms onto which he had hammered the ancient symbols calling forth things like health and joy, and also: fertility	CON	Inara’s family remained close with Liene and Inara’s father named his daughter after her.
And when my father and my stepmother had their first child, my little sister, they named her for this woman who helped carry my father through the worst of the war	CON	
We went to visit my sister’s namesake in London when my sister was just three months old and when Liene reached down to take her from her stroller for the first time, I can only imagine her body instinctively remembered what it was to hold my father at that age	CON	
I could not sleep for the jet lag while we were there, and I remember once finding Liene sitting at the kitchen table in the middle of the night	CON	When visiting Liene in England, Inara saw her crying.
She seemed to be crying	DEL	
I was maybe ten years old at the time	DEL	
She did not say anything, just fetched a glass jar of milk from the back step, its foil seal studded with tiny puncture marks from birds pushing their beaks through to reach the cream	DEL	
She sloshed some milk from the bottle into a pan that she heated until it steamed, and then she sat with me, lost in thought, until I had emptied the whole mug	DEL	
Then she walked me back to my bed and pulled the covers to my chin and placed a palm, soft from her years in the city, on the side of my face until I closed my eyes	DEL	
Years later, when she was at the edge of death, Liene wrote to my father, begging him to help her, to come to her	CON	On her deathbed, Liene called for Inara’s father to come to her.
Her husband was gone	DEL	
It had not been a happy marriage	DEL	
She was all alone now, in London, and she wanted him to know how she had thought of him as her son, too, in those days on the war roads, imagined for a brief while that he was her boy	CON	Liene considered Inara’s father as a kind of a son to her.
He had given her a glimpse of what it was to be a mother, and she ached for him still	DEL	
He never wrote back	CON	Inara’s father did not reach back out to Liene and is ashamed of it.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
My father admitted this story to me only recently, and he wept as he told me	CON	
It just felt too intense, he said	DEL	
I'm so ashamed when I think about it now, that I let her down like that, but I just couldn't handle it	DEL	
It frightened me	DEL	
I didn't know how to respond in the face of all that...	DEL	
He never finished his sentence that night, but the word I insert even now, as I replay our conversation, is <i>need</i>	DEL	
And here I mean <i>need</i> in its most ancient and basic sense	DEL	
Not <i>need</i> as something soft or longing or wistful, but <i>need</i> as something anguished, howling, blood kin, even in etymology, to misery, to suffering, to anguish— <i>need</i> as linguistic ancestor to the Old English word for <i>trouble</i> or <i>pain</i> , but also: the Proto-Germanic word for <i>violence</i>	DEL	
Here I mean <i>need</i> as something that awakens us to that which causes us unendurable distress, but also: that which could help us abide it	DEL	
Need teaches us how to articulate that which could exist on the other side of our suffering, to give it a name	DEL	
But let's say it is your name that is spoken	DEL	
There's something intensely moving about that—to be called in such a way	DEL	
But there is also something frightening, too	CON	Inara understands how her father could have been scared at Liene's pleas.
Because now there is no way to separate yourself or your understanding of the depth of that person's need of you from the depth of the pain that summoned it	DEL	
When I tell Ausma what I have managed to piece together of my grandmother's journey, her months of flight, she says nothing at first	DEL	
Just gets up, and starts to break kindling to start a fire in the kitchen stove for the bread	DEL	
Do you know what hurts the most? Ausma says at last	CON	Having found out about Livija's journey, Ausma realizes Livija did not have it easier.
She struggles to speak, keeps her face to the fire	DEL	
I needed her	DEL	
But, from what you say, she needed me	DEL	
All she went through	DEL	
And now, my sister is buried so far from here, in strange soil	DEL	
There's no way for me to go to her, to do something for her, even now	CON	Ausma wishes there was a way she could have or could help her sister.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Later that night, as I try to sleep, I will wonder whether the sounds I am hearing are coming from the barn, where the mother and her calves are now berthed in separate stalls, or from somewhere closer still	DEL	

CHAPTER 14

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The next time I come back to Latvia, it's winter, the cows' coats thick and draggly, as if in imitation of the hoarfrost that tinsels the trees each morning	CON	Inara returns to Latvia in winter.
The local newspaper keeps its moon watch, says now—when the moon is old, as thin as a curl of fat—it is time to take saw teeth to trees	CON	Latvians believe in observing nature and the stars to determine the future.
This way, the resulting wood will release the most heat	DEL	
On the evening news, an astrologer is interviewed with the kind of seriousness one normally sees reserved for members of government	DEL	
What can we expect in the year ahead? She advises everyone to spend more time in nature	DEL	
In the local paper, a story runs that more Latvian babies are being born abroad than in-country	CON	Emigration from Latvia is widescale.
What's a young person supposed to do, says Aivars, the husband of Ausma's daughter Ligita	DEL	
Live next to all these abandoned farmhouses, falling down around him, with his hand on his heart, singing "God Bless Latvia"? Their daughter, the mother of the two little girls, including the one who found the nest on my first visit, has recently moved to Norway	CON	
The days are long and dark, with an edge of cold that sears the lungs	DEL	
They send me to the sauna, where Aivars has strung camouflage netting outside, so that we can sit in the heat until we cannot bear it, then fling open the back door and plunge our steaming bodies in the old well to cool down	CON	Inara has a sauna with her cousins, which is followed by a dip in frozen water.
We jump feetfirst so our toes will crack the ice that seals the water's surface	DEL	
I imagine, briefly, my grandmother Livija toeing frozen puddles in the flare-lit woods	DEL	
The puppy from my first visit is now so big his paws punch holes in the snow as large as tea saucers, and he serves as personal escort to each steaming stalker	DEL	
He stands at the well's edge and greets us with jubilant barks when we shoot back up to repierce the iced surface, screaming without sound for the shock of the cold, our lungs learning to heave air again, as if reborn	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
One day, he will run into the woods, trailing cheeky curls of breath like he has swallowed one of Aivars's cigarettes, and never come back	DEL	
When this happens, Ligita will go to the neighbor, the man who sees things, the man who everyone agrees can use a stick to find well water where no one else can	CON	There is a man in the village who people believe have psychic powers.
He tells her that the puppy is dead, that he tangled with something ferocious and wild, and he tried, with all the strength he had, to get back to them, but he was too hurt, and couldn't drag himself home	DEL	
The neighbor who sees things describes the exact spot where the dog's body lies in the snow, but one part of the forest can look so much like the next in winter, and so there is nothing to do but accept another disappearance	DEL	
I draw an "x" in the fog of the car window the next time we drive past the pine at the crossroads that once marked the way to the old cemetery	DEL	
One morning, I wake up sick, shivering	DEL	
Probably from being too reckless with the sauna and the well	DEL	
Everyone agrees I may have invited a chill into my body	DEL	
Ligita, who also sees things, though mostly in her dreams—A witch! Aivars says in a way that you can tell is joking and maybe not joking all at once—makes me inhale the smoke from a burned thread of linen	CON	When Inara gets a cold her cousins offer her natural remedies – inhaling steam and drinking balsam.
Aivars follows with a shot of balsam	DEL	
One for him, too, <i>so you won't be lonely</i>	DEL	
And then one more all around, <i>so that we favor each leg equally</i>	DEL	
The first thing she saw when they finally reached the other side of the sun: nothing	CON	The family's destination in Siberia is a destitute place.
The landscape told her nothing	DEL	
The sky was white	DEL	
The ground was white	DEL	
White as the piles of boiled bones her grandfather kept in his tannery shed	DEL	
White as the linen threads Ausma used to weave the sheets she imagined she would one day spread on her wedding bed, but which instead were now flapping on a neighbor's clothesline, muttering Ausma's initials to the wind— AS, AS, AS	DEL	
They stepped off the train into a void, her brother, Janis, hopping on one leg, the other taken first by gangrene, then a prison doctor's saw, his crutches puncturing the scabbed and crusted top layer of winter's storms	CON	Ausma's brother Janis had lost one leg during the war.
Even when it was clear the Soviets had won, Janis had fought along with what remained of the Latvian Legion for seven months, backed into the westernmost edge of Latvia, refusing to give up	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
When, finally, they surrendered to the Russians, they were all taken as prisoners of war, sentenced to a labor camp outside of Moscow, on the way to Leningrad	DEL	
There, his leg was crushed when the coal mine in which he had been working collapsed	DEL	
They had allowed him to return home, only after the doctors had insisted he would not live long anyway	DEL	
I guess I got better so they could send me to Siberia and kill me a second time, he said	DEL	
Her mother, Alma, followed slowly behind, trying to match her daughter's steps, as Ausma cleared a path for her through the snows	DEL	
They had thought it so cold inside the boxcar, the three of them trying to huddle under the single blanket Ausma had brought from the farm, watching through the slats as all color was leached from the passing land	CON	The weather in Siberia is extremely harsh.
There were others who had even less, who had come with only the clothes they were wearing, bare feet inside their boots	DEL	
But this cold was like nothing they had ever known, like something wounded, ferocious with misery and pain	DEL	
Later, the cold would try to take them as they walked, swallowing them in drifts that reached to their rib cages, smothering the breath from their chests, reaching into their pockets, filling them with snow	DEL	
It would try to take them in their sleep, crawling into their beds, reweaving the strands of their blankets with ice	DEL	
It stole their food, rendered it inedible, lifted the skin from their tongues, turned cheeks and the tips of noses the color of singed earth	DEL	
This was what waited for them after nearly three weeks of travel, packed into a single railcar, the space necessary for each person calculated by one particularly poetic bureaucrat to be <i>no larger than a grave</i>	DEL	
Bog lands, unending steppes, burred and smothering forest, blank lands	CON	The landscape is empty and unproviding.
Areas in Russia's remote east, unpopulated, unnamed, unacknowledged on any map	DEL	
Although no one ever explicitly said their destination was Siberia, nor gave any explanation what this was about, Ausma knew, from the first round of deportations she had witnessed almost eight years ago, at thirteen, where they were headed, and that they were being sent there because someone somewhere for some reason wanted them banished to a place from which they could not come back	CON	The location for exilants was chosen to be so far and so cut-off so that the people could not return on their own.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She was a special exile now, her passport confiscated, a form presented for her to sign— <i>I have chosen to relocate of my own volition and will never return to the region I previously occupied: I will live out the rest of my days in the area where I have volunteered to be assigned</i>	DEL	
Then her paperwork was dated 1949, stamped <i>strictly secret</i> , treated, outwardly, as if it never existed, and archived— along with 41,000 other files, known collectively to those involved in the planning and execution of this mass exile by its code name: <i>Operation Tidal Wave</i>	DEL	
It felt strange to walk again, after so long on the train, its juddering still echoing through Ausma as she helped her mother and brother toward the processing center, a crude, sprawling compound of barracks like buildings where they were told to prepare for the selection, although no one explained exactly what that meant	DEL	
Still echoing inside them: collective memories of the journey east, which held the goatlike cries of an elderly man, all alone, saying the name of his daughter, or his wife or his mother, no one knew, over and over again until it sounded like one continuous trilling of a single vowel, EEEEEEEEEE; the woman who wet herself rather than perch on the slick lip of the hole which served as the latrine for the entire car, steam rising from her lap afterward, until someone next to her, wanting to maintain at least a symbolic privacy, snuffed it with a coat; the cups of soup handed out at the depots where the trains would stop, potato skins floating in tepid broth, chased with a swallow of what tasted like water in which fallen leaves had stewed for days; and the tiny bundle leaving the guard's hand	CON	Throughout the journey, they were cramped together all with their own and the shared misery.
What the mother of the baby did after the guard took her dead child, Ausma does not recall, or does not want to recall	DEL	
So she chooses silence instead	DEL	
<i>I don't think she made a sound</i>	DEL	
<i>There was more quiet than you would think</i>	DEL	
Once, seen through the slats, along the rail lines: a corpse, possibly, someone tossed from a different Siberian transport, a perfect silhouette left untouched by teeth or beaks	DEL	
Glimpsed through the slats, the body looked disconcertingly like someone who had simply stopped after a long trek and lay down momentarily to consider the sky	DEL	
<i>But there was this, too; I shouldn't forget this:</i> The local Russians who ventured up to the railcars at some of the smaller stops, mittening weeviled bread through the open doors, extending pails of water	CON	Some of the locals in Russia gave food and water to the people in the cattle trains while they had stopped.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
How quickly the scene cuts from cruelty to kindness, and it is clear that this is how she experienced it, how it felt at the time, a bewildering, contradictory series of encounters that confused kindness and pain	DEL	
I see the same themes emerge in the accounts of others who were taken on the same transport as Ausma, from the same village, on the same day, transcripts of survivors' oral histories that I have begun to collect from any written account I can find	DEL	
Taken together, read one after another, the voices become a kind of communal dirge, a strange polyphony of memories and fears and wonderings that speak at once to the collective experience of suffering, and to no one's experience but their own: When we stepped off the train, the first thing I saw was carts, pulled by oxen, and they loaded the sickest people in the back, those who could no longer stand, and ordered the rest of us to fall in behind	DEL	
The barracks where they took us first had been built to hold German prisoners of war	CON	The accommodations were barracks for war prisoners.
That's what I was told	DEL	
They had been built hastily, with green wood, so there were gaps in the walls and the floors, as the wood wept all its moisture, then shrank	DEL	
There were people who grew tired quickly—we had eaten so little for days—and sometimes someone dropped to the ground, but we were told we couldn't stop for them	CON	Those who were too exhausted and died from the road were left behind.
What I want to know is why did our guards have guns? Where were we going to run? When the ice melted, I saw them take bodies and drop them in the lake	DEL	
Someone said they heard that we would be presented to the local collectives, as soon as the ice broke on the river, and they would take turns picking us, like one picks a cow	CON	The exilants were picked for work like slaves or animals.
The weakest would be sent to the worst places, so they might die quicker	DEL	
You didn't want to go where the invalids and the elderly went	DEL	
I went and found berries to crush and rub on my cheeks, so I would look like someone healthy, someone they wanted to choose	CON	Ausma tried to make herself look healthier to go to a better place.
They were among the last to be chosen	DEL	
Not the very last, but close to the last	DEL	
First, the eyes of the collective's officials had fallen on the space where her brother's leg should have been	CON	Her invalid brother and weak mother were looked at as weak workers.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Next, the members of the collective studied Ausma's mother, Alma, her face withered beneath her kerchief, like the surface of an apple, forgotten beneath the tree, left to the workings of the wasps and the ants and the rain	DEL	
It was clear that the two of them would be useless to contribute to the required work quotas	DEL	
Then they saw Ausma	CON	
Ausma, the girl who had spent the last four years since her father's death running the family farm because her brother was too damaged, her mother too weak with sickness and grief, her sister lost to the war roads, they had no idea where	CON	Ausma had been running the farm alone after the war and had the strength to provide for her family.
There was no one left but this girl, who had abandoned the idea of school or dances or courting to rise at three each morning to milk the cows and ration the hay that she alone had scythed and turned and dried and wagoned back to the loft, day after day as summer transitioned to fall, until her hands turned black with blood	DEL	
The fabric of her dresses—now thin and shiny at the back, stretched and strained by the thickening of her shoulders, the hardening of her body	DEL	
Like stone, she thought, not wood	DEL	
She felt the grinding of her joints whenever she raised her arms to swing an axe or to wrap a calving chain around one of the cows' reluctant births	DEL	
They saw in her the entire story of the past four years: she could do the work of all three	CON	
A woman stepped up to Ausma, her hands encased in what looked like fur from a dog, something with an angry, wiry pelt, with what looked like tooth scars, tar-colored welts, running beneath the fur, like veins	DEL	
The woman spoke, her voice low, expressionless, formal	DEL	
Ausma didn't speak Russian, and she couldn't pull any meaning from the woman's tone	CON	Ausma did not speak Russian, so she could not understand the locals.
The woman began to walk away, then turned and indicated that Ausma and her brother and mother should follow	DEL	
It wasn't until much later that Ausma finally learned what the woman had said that day	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
But not until after they had moved into a corner of the woman's kitchen, in a small shack at the edge of a collective farm, a place named for the Russian word for <i>flame</i> , where for half the year, milk left in a pail for more than five minutes would freeze; after the woman had taught Ausma her first Russian word, <i>chai</i> , a word which in normal circumstances meant tea, but in this new world meant boiled water with a lashing of milk, skimmed with a spoon from one of the frozen pails; after Ausma had gathered the woman's story—that she had lived in Siberia for decades, had survived famines that had killed everyone else around her	CON	Ausma and her family were picked by a woman who had also suffered and felt sympathy for her.
She'd said: <i>I am sorry this has happened to you</i>		

CHAPTER 15

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
When I was still in college, working for a paper in Albuquerque for the summer, I once took a man's life from him as his sister listened	DEL	
What I mean is that I had been assigned to work the newsroom's predawn shift, lone monitor of the scanners and phones and faxes, ready to catch any possible emergencies that might happen when the rest of the world was still deep in sleep	DEL	
Mostly, it would be quiet, supervisors assured me	DEL	
But early in my assignment, I received a call from the local police department: a man murdered after an altercation outside a bar	DEL	
They gave me his name and date of birth	DEL	
This was newsworthy, the supervising editor told me, when I sketched the details for him; we had just enough time to get something in the first edition, if I got to work	DEL	
And so I began to do what I had been trained to do, to call those who might know the man, who might, using language borrowed from one veteran reporter, <i>help me provide readers with a portrait of your loved one, help make him more than a name and a victim</i>	DEL	
I located a number of someone who shared the man's surname, and dialed	DEL	
A woman answered	DEL	
I was sorry to bother her so early, I said	DEL	
But I was looking for the family of ___? That's my brother, she said	DEL	
He'd been staying with her, she explained, but he was out right now	DEL	
And then she paused, as if letting her words and the implication of them in this context catch up with each other	DEL	
What's happened? she said	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
That's when I knew that police had not yet informed the family of this man's death	CON	While working in a newspaper and looking for a story, Inara had to reveal to a person that their relative had died.
It was an unheard-of breach of protocol	DEL	
Police departments never released to the press the name of someone who had died until family had been informed first	DEL	
But something had clearly broken down on this night	DEL	
You should call the Albuquerque police, I tried, but the woman was yelling now— <i>What's happened to my brother</i> —no longer a plea, but an insistence	DEL	
At some level she knew, and it was as if she wanted me to do the right thing, even if it was the most hurtful thing, wanted me to get it over with, because she didn't want me to let her imagine for another second that this could be anything other than the horror she suspected	DEL	
He was killed, I said, outside a bar	DEL	
And I still remember the sound she made, then the sound of a phone falling, the click of my own handset, the way I hated myself for summoning just enough momentary numbness to write something that reflected none of the ugliness of what had just happened, but not enough to be unmoved by praise from my editor for my <i>good work</i>	DEL	
I had left no record of my cruelty, only a clean, compelling narrative about pain, as it is suffered and inflicted upon others	DEL	
Ausma does not seem to want to talk anymore	DEL	
It's summer now, a new visit	DEL	
She does not say as much to me	DEL	
She is so grateful to have the presence of her sister restored to her life through me, that she will suffer my questions, endure the details that I am keen to write down to <i>fill in the details of our family story</i>	DEL	
She does not correct me, never says, don't you mean your story? Because both of us know this has become my story, a story I am constructing from her stories, her words, her memories, to try to answer something for myself, something I don't know how to reach, except through her	DEL	
But it is a story Ausma does not want anymore	CON	On the next visit, Ausma has become more distant towards Inara.
She abandoned it years ago, walked away and left it to rot like the remains of <i>Lembi</i>	DEL	
So she simply stops speaking	DEL	
She will walk away suddenly, will go outside	DEL	
And quietly remove the chain from the dog that charges anyone who does not live at the house	CON	To ensure that Inara will not follow her, Ausma unleashes the dog.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The dog that has bitten at least five people, I will discover later, including a man who came to fix the telephone	DEL	
Once, while helping Harijs in the barn, I wandered too close, and he lunged to the end of his tether and snapped the air in front of my nose	DEL	
The dog watches me through the window, guarding me now from leaving the house	DEL	
I move from room to room, so that I might see what Ausma is doing: scattering scraps for the chickens, dragging a hoe down her rows of potatoes, culling softened turnips from the bins in the cold cellar	DEL	
The dog moves whenever I move	DEL	
I nap	DEL	
I reread my notes	DEL	
I open the door to try to call to Ausma to tie him up so I can go outside and help her with chores, but I make it as far as the porch before the dog charges	DEL	
Always, a few hours later, Ausma returns	DEL	
And I know that this means that questions are over for the day	DEL	
It is our truce	DEL	
One night, as we are watching an old Latvian movie from the 1980s, a period drama set in Siberia, she is suddenly animated, commenting on the sets, their accuracy, linking what she sees to her own memories	CON	While watching a film set in Siberia, Inara inquires for some details, but Ausma shuts off.
So I think I might attempt to ask her more questions, draw out just a few more details, and I imagine that I am being delicate, keeping things light, but I can feel her growing smaller and smaller, pulling into herself, until finally she is no smaller than the spot that remains at the center of the screen of the old television, which she has shut off mid-program	CON	
Time for bed, she says	DEL	
The next morning, I go for a run while it is still dark, past rye fields and barley fields and down mud-dried roads where I must occasionally stop for a procession of cows; through the nearby village where lightning recently struck and split a linden tree in which storks had nested, making the front page of the local paper: “Baby Storks Crushed”	DEL	
I have made it a point to never leave the house until I know the dog is tied, and they have been good about keeping him restrained until I return	CON	Inara is scared of the dog.
But as I come up the path to Ausma’s house, I see the dog’s empty lead coiled in the dirt	DEL	
I spot Harijs, outside the barn, and I wave my hands, hoping to alert him—and not the dog—to my presence	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He manages to understand my pantomime and fishes his finger under the dog's collar to hold him as I slip inside	DEL	
I freed him, says Ausma, when I mention the dog was loose	CON	Ausma explains that she unleashes the dog because she feel sorry for him.
I feel so bad for him tied up all day	DEL	
Like a prisoner	DEL	
Besides, he knows you are living here now	DEL	
He knows you are family	DEL	
Later that afternoon, when I go to visit one of Ausma's granddaughters, who lives just up the hill, I double-check that the chain still holds a dog	DEL	
The evening is warm, like new milk, the locals say	DEL	
I sit with Ausma's granddaughter on a bench carved from a log, in view of the cows that have been turned out to graze for the night	CON	Inara visits Ausma's granddaughter who lives nearby.
Ausma's granddaughter tells me which cows love people, will follow them like dogs, nuzzling hands, licking faces, which are slow or slightly touched and need the others to remind them of their stalls, which can be coaxed with heels of bread	DEL	
She recites the names of every cow she has loved	DEL	
As I walk back down the hill drunk on the summer air and the strange sweetness of the conversation, a recitation of cows, I register movement out of the corner of my eye, something slipping soundlessly from behind a stand of filberttrees	DEL	
And I have only enough time to register this fact when I feel a pinch and burn and my leg gives, as the dog sinks a tooth in my calf	GEN	Ausma's dog bites Inara.

## CHAPTER 16

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And so it came to pass that they were now living in the days that followed the war's end, the days of placelessness, when more than 30 million people had been scattered across Europe and had lost their words for home	GEN	After the war more than 30 million people had been removed from their homes.
All of them insisting, for wildly different reasons, that they could no more return to where they had just come than bombs can be undropped; than numbers on arms could be uninked; than death sentences for collaborating with the enemy—not because you believed in fascism but only because you wanted so badly to stop - communism—could be unissued	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
No more than the shame could be unfelt that sometimes squirms its way to the surface of your waking thoughts before you manage to push it back down, the things you did or perhaps just as much the things you did not do that privileged you and your survival over anyone else's, that meant you ignored another's visible suffering	DEL	
The same shorthand was used to refer to all of them: DPs, as in Displaced Persons	GEN	The people were referred to as DP: Displaced Persons.
An estimated 200,000 to 250,000 Latvians fled for the West during the war years; of that number, more than 100,000 were ultimately forced to make the trip back—because they were recaptured by the Soviets or returned by Western forces	DEL	
That left about 120,000 Latvians who remained DPs	ZERO	About 120 000 Latvians were DPs.
They took the acronym and used its letters to construct an alternate term for themselves: Dieva Putnini	ZERO	Latvians made the acronym to mean Dieva Putniņi – God's little birds – always in motion.
Dieva from dievs, as in the Latvian god of sky, Putnini as in the diminutive for bird	DEL	
<i>Little birds</i>	DEL	
As in that which is ungrounded; as in that which can foretell sorrow, but also possibly hope; as in being in an endless state of passage	CON	
When finally, my grandmother and my father and Liene and Maruta passed through the steel gates of Camp 269 UNRRA Pinneberg, where 3800 of the placeless, mostly Latvians, had been assigned temporary shelter, my father had only just found his capacity for speech, the ability to name himself and the things around him— <i>little bird</i> ; <i>lost boy</i>	GEN	When they reached the camp, the infant Inara's father had begun to speak.
At night, curled in on himself, as if making himself as small as possible to give others more room, my father, the baby who had absorbed the flight paths of the bombers from his mother's arms, and from Liene's arms, now dreamed in a barracks that had billeted young Luftwaffe pilots	DEL	
It was a life defined by waiting, wherever you found yourself, whether assigned to scratchy cots wedged inside stalls that until recently berthed saddle horses for the German cavalry or boarded in bunks installed in former surgical suites that still smelled faintly of amputations, cauterized wounds	CON	The early days in the camp were run by waiting and uncertainty.
Mothers approached toddlers in their rooms, absorbed in quiet play, only to discover them gumming what looked like scraps of exploded ordnance	DEL	
Those early days passed in an endless stretch of unstructured hours, the monotony of small temporary rooms	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Together, they were cleansed in clouds of DDT, the babies sometimes laughing into the fog, trying to catch it in their mouths like snowfall, the women instructed to kneel slightly, as if in curtsy, and to lift the hem of their skirts just enough to accommodate the delouser's nozzle, with its puff of air and the fine dusting that would drive away the lice and their typhus	CON	The refugees were collectively disinfected.
For hours afterward, each step, each brush of one thigh against the other, would release the chemical's smell—hints of burned marzipan	DEL	
No, others said, more like borscht	DEL	
Lice were not the only named fear	CON	The camp was an anti-sanitary place.
Also: dysentery, rickets, diphtheria, syphilis, TB, scabies, polio	CON	
They learned to surrender themselves for regular medical inspections, passed their health record books to the nurses and doctors to initial without thought for privacy, their lives now a running count of coughs and infections, lung spots and fevers	DEL	
On the days of the mass inoculations—hundreds of the camp's children injected at once, the nurses punching the flesh of one twitching buttock after another—the mothers helped skin their babies from their chunky wool tights	DEL	
Rabbit pants, the Latvians called them	DEL	
But for all the shots, sickness still found them	CON	
One morning, Livija lifted Maruta from sheets sweatedwet	CON	Livija's daughter Maruta fell ill in the camp with polio.
In time, they would learn she had contracted polio	DEL	
But on that day, all they knew was the force of her fever, that she was listless, unable to sip water without distress	DEL	
A nurse came, and perhaps thinking it was something that could be cured with a dose of antibiotics, she decided to administer a shot, a quick punch and wriggle of the rabbit's haunch	DEL	
Whether out of haste or ignorance, or both, she chose to slip the needle into the center of Maruta's buttock, and pierced her sciaticnerve	CON	A nurse stuck a needle in a nerve and Maruta's leg went numb.
Almost immediately, Maruta's leg on that side went limp, the ankle flopping as if attached to the foot by a thin tongue ofskin	DEL	
Between this, and the effects of the polio, Maruta would ultimately struggle to take a single step, her legs bound in braces, pushing a walker	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
And, eventually, though still years in the future, but already starting then, in the camp—as she tried, and failed, to grasp the hands of the other small children whose mothers encouraged them to circle up in the weak sun to sing and dance as a distraction from the guard towers and the phlegm-colored soup and the fact that they were swaddled not in diapers but in flyers instructing the refugees on the regulations of the camp—the muscles of all four of her limbs started to shrink, atrophying, until one day, which would mark the beginning of her last days, the only comfortable place for her was bed	CON	Maruta never recovered.
These were the unnamed fears: That you—you were the reason this happened	CON	The parents felt guilty for subjecting their children to such a life.
That you were the one to blame	DEL	
That the moment you pushed the door closed on your former life, the moment you took to the road, chose flight over your family and the farm—all the while telling yourself that you were making the right choice, the only choice—you might have been mistaken	DEL	
And now this: your little boy, his sudden not-speaking, like an envelope quietly sealing itself shut	CON	Inara’s father became mute while in the camp.
What did my father understand of their life among the placeless? He would have been too young to remember the walls of the refugee processing centers that they passed through, covered with the names of family members whose whereabouts were unknown, sometimes a photo, if photos had come with the refugees: <i>Have you seen?</i> But he most likely heard the nightly broadcasts that played on the camp radio, the voices of children, old enough to recall their names and from where they had come, sending their words out in search of lost parents	DEL	
Perhaps he even understood the pitch of their pleas, if not the actual meaning	DEL	
Did he know his own father was missing, like so many of the men who were there, but weren’t there, a number written then crossed out on their wives’ intake forms? He turned one, then two, before he even learned what the word <i>father</i> meant, at least what it meant in relationship to his own life, the shape that it occupied, its silence, save for the scrape of rough hands jacketing you for a trip outside, the impatient clapping tempo of a walk too fast for small legs, the crusting of one weeping eye	DEL	
On the subject of where Emils had been for the last two years, and what had happened to him in the war, he appeared to have drawn a line through his memories, as if he were a document from which hundreds of pages had suddenly been redacted	CON	Emils, himself, never revealed what had happened to him after the war.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
But the rage that sometimes gripped him and filled the little room that they shared—that rattled the tins of dried milk and sardines and sent rolling from the table the cigarettes that came in the refugees’ boxes of rations, and which everyone traded on the black market for the things they really needed, like soap and sewing supplies—said enough for his family to suspect that he’d never really returned from wherever it was he’d gone	CON	Reunited with his family at the camp, Emils still suffered stress and anger attacks.
What he did not say: After the doctors had picked the bone fragments from the hole in his head and sutured it shut, then fitted the pit of his skull’s orbit with an eye made of glass, after my grandfather had finally emerged from the coma induced by his injuries, the German military hospital in which he recuperated was seized by the Allies	DEL	
At this point, my grandfather was transferred to a prisoner-of-war camp in Belgium, where the Allies tried to make sense of men who wore the uniforms of Nazis, but who claimed that they were not Nazis at all, only conscripts, forced to join the army of their occupier	CON	After the war, Emils was interrogated by the Allies for being in the Nazi army, but was later let go.
There were interrogations, and inside those interrogation rooms, if the stories of the men who were held there can be believed, the kinds of reckonings that accompany war’s end, the release of collective anger and rage and fear	DEL	
In the end, after months of questioning, Allied investigators ruled that he was not a criminal, and let him go	DEL	
But from the larger moral question of what constitutes collaboration, he would never be released	DEL	
Once again, my grandmother corrected her calculations, restoring the original <i>number of family members</i> to include her husband, but only because there was no other way to record the presence of someone who was back, but not back	DEL	
He was not her first experience with a lost love, but she had learned the first time, at the tip of a nail, not to expect too much	DEL	
And so, when her second lost love returned to her, she understood that she should be grateful for whatever remained—the skin laced fine with keloids, the lumbering pace, the square jaw grinding, always grinding, awake or asleep	CON	Emils returned to his wife, but the war had changed him both physically and mentally.
She had heard enough resurrection stories, myths that celebrate the possibility of regeneration—the revivification of those assumed dead—to know that there is almost always a hidden cost, almost always something that is held back in exchange for the right to return from the other side	DEL	
When he spoke, his voice sounded like the tip of a match drawn across phosphorus	DEL	
Mostly, he didn’t speak	GEN	Emils was mostly silent.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
He could disappear at any moment, even as he lay right beside her	DEL	
She could feel him scudding about inside himself, traveling years and miles, before abruptly returning to their bed to look at her in a way that told her she might be the only thing tethering him to this room, to her, to the two children asleep on their cots at their feet	DEL	
My grandmother listened to him breathe himself back to calm, the four of them suspended in the night-sounds of the barracks, the sound of secrets uncontained, slipping through the loose weave of the blankets hung as partitions, between the suitcases stacked in imitation of walls: who is loving whom, who is striking whom, who is sick on homebrew, who neglects their children, who calls out in their nightmares, and who thrashes in silence	DEL	
Like this, she would remind him without words	DEL	
Being alive is like this	DEL	
A year after my grandfather's return, my grandmother gave birth to another child, a boy	CON	In the camp, Livija and Emils together welcomed their third child.
This time, my grandfather was there to hold his second son	DEL	
Now, with a brother, my father began to find his voice again, to whisper to him, to tell him all he thought he should know about their home, its secrets and wonders and dangers: the puddles of oil and floating garbage at the camp's periphery that could be lanced with sticks; the older boys who stole and fought and ran from the police, and who once blamed my father for their supposed crimes when an officer stopped to talk to them, so that my father ran, too, and burrowed beneath a mattress for a very long time before he realized, in a pinioning of confusion and fear, that no one was looking for him at all	GEN	Inara's father re-started talking when the little brother came.
By now, most of the refugees had lived nearly three years in circumstances meant only ever to be temporary	DEL	
On the question of where the hundreds of thousands in Europe displaced by war should go next, the rest of the world had remained decidedly silent	CON	
Only Great Britain, Australia and Canada had come forward offering to help in any substantive way— <i>Where would you be willing to be resettled?</i> a form from that period had asked; <i>Canada</i> , my grandfather had written, his handwriting less certain than his answer—but even still, restrictions were such that all available spots would likely go only to young single men and women	CON	After the war, only Great Britain, Australia, and Canada offered the refugees to resettle.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Few countries seemed to want resettle families with small children, let alone families who might be supporting someone with a disability, the war-maimed, the chronically ill, the elderly	DEL	Few countries wanted to resettle families with small children and the disabled.
In the United States, Congress shut down all attempts to relocate any refugees, citing possible <i>shortages of housing and consumer goods, fear of reconversion unemployment, and apprehension as to the type of persons who were inmates of the DP camps in Europe</i>	GEN	The USA also was against taking in refugees.
And in this way, the impermanent became mistaken for the indefinite	CON	DPs had nowhere to go and were forced to live in the camp.
Life in the indefinite was to scale piles of war rubble for sport, to root through the grit for anything that could be turned into toys, fragments of magnet, webs of cloth, unburned books, miraculously, once, a spoon	DEL	
It was to push donated baby dolls in donated baby carriages across reclaimed fields that had originally been graded to accommodate soldiers for inspection; to run naked on your mother's orders so that the sun on your bare skin might somehow help unbow the bend to your legs, unthicken the bones in your wrists that had begun to bulge beneath the skin, the first signs of rickets	DEL	
It was to pretend the smears of guts and grease in the barracks' basement were not from the pig reported stolen from a nearby farm	DEL	
It was to see nothing when seeing nothing was required, as if you, too, had rinsed your gums with some of the black-market liquor that was said to sometimes cause blindness	DEL	
Life in the indefinite was to leave the adults to meetings where they argued over the preservation of the language, the loosening of grammar, the loss of the old words for things that had no equivalent in this new life	DEL	
They should resist becoming like potatoes with old eyes, one former farmer put it, never to be replanted	CON	The Latvians in the camp were adamant that they would not stay in the camp forever.
So they searched for a word that would embody the state of remaining ready for the possibility of return, even as they prepared for the unlikelihood that they could ever go back	DEL	
By day they completed questionnaires and enrolled in English lessons and submitted themselves to certification tests so that they could prove themselves skilled at something—sewing, or typing, or factory work—anything that might convince a potential host nation that they were worthy of sponsorship, ready to contribute in any way needed	CON	DPs learnt English and underwent tests showing their skills, so that some country would pick them.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
At night, they danced in folk collectives, taught their children the words to the old national anthem and organized choir recitals where the song begging the wind to carry them back to Latvia became the exiles' new unofficial anthem	GEN	Latvians tried to preserve their culture while in the camp.
They hacked gardens from the fields where soldiers once drilled so that they could follow along with the seasons, as they would have back home, marking each day not in the usual increments of time, but by what is growing or what is not growing or what will soon grow	CON	The flow of time was marked by what grew in the garden.
And the chemists who had fled with the contents of their laboratories unable to bear the thought of leaving their life's work behind—Florence flasks and Bunsen burners, test tubes and crucible tongs; the librarians who arrived with armloads of their treasured first editions; the members of the national theater company who unlocked suitcases to reveal wigs and costumes; the printer who unloaded a working press—they all began to share their passions with their campmates	GEN	People of different professions continued their work in the camp – publishing books and newspapers, giving lessons.
They published newspapers and printed books, such as the saga of Bear Slayer, his Black Knight now decidedly Russian	DEL	
The former academics re-created their lesson plans, hosting night classes for the refugees in their native languages—art history and folklore, statistics and physics—so many classes that the academics would eventually open their own university	DEL	
Among the faculty of the new Baltic University, as it was called: my grandfather, the former economics professor, his old formulas awakening in him once more	CON	Emils began working as a lecturer in the university founded in the camp.
<i>Lektor</i> , he noted on his camp papers, wherever occupation was required, and inside the family's small room, he took to stacking all the books he could find that might be relevant to his classes—Adam Smith's <i>An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations</i> , <i>Self-Administration in England and Wales</i> , <i>Statistics I</i> in English, which he read with the help of a dictionary, given to him by one of the British officers who were running the camp	DEL	
Before long, he was named Chair of Economic Theory, and the family was walled in on all sides—as they ate, or as the adults made love with their hands over each other's mouths so the children wouldn't hear, or as they fought, or told the children not to fight—by books offering concrete theories as to how and why people make the choices they do	DEL	
In this way, the camp residents gave themselves jobs when there were none, but for the lecturing and the farming and the dancing and the singing, they received no salary	GEN	The camp residents worked but received no pay because no one had any money.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Occasionally there were tasks to be done around the camp for what amounted to pocket money, never much	DEL	
Still, sometimes it was enough pocket money that you might decide, maybe, today, to bake something sweet—enough money anyway, to send your boys in search of a lemon	DEL	
Lemons aren't very sweet, said my father, once they were outside	DEL	
Let's get candy instead, said his little brother	DEL	
No, let's get an orange, said my father, oranges are better		
Yes, agreed his brother, an orange will be a much better surprise than a lemon	DEL	
It was their first attempt at a present	DEL	
She did not scold them, merely set aside what she had started of the dough, then quartered the orange, and let the smell of the pith fill the room, as if this, too, could be a kind of celebration	DEL	
There were other outings: Once, with their father, to the market just outside the camp in search of a fish that could feed all five of them	CON	The DPs could go outside the camp, as well.
The boys insisted on one so fresh they could see his gills still bellowing, pleading	DEL	
As they walked back to camp, the fish wrapped loosely in newspaper, the boys began to beg: Please, can we put him in the bathtub to see if he will swim?	CON	Once, Emils and his sons bought a fish in the market for dinner.
Their father wasn't having it, this fish was to eat	DEL	
Besides, the bathtub was not theirs to put fish in as they pleased, he told them	DEL	
They shared it with all the other residents on their barracks' floor	DEL	
They begged all the way home	DEL	
Finally, he gave in to them	CON	The kids put the fish in the communal bathtub to see it swim.
But only for an hour, he said	DEL	
And then it's dinner	DEL	
But then an hour became a day and a night and another day, and soon they were all listening for the sound of approaching footsteps, then rushing ahead to slam the communal bathroom door shut, so they could scoop the fish from the bathtub and into a pail, ridding the emptied basin of his roping strands of shit, his errant scales	CON	The kids then kept the fish in the bath, hiding it from others.
All yours, they would say, trying not to slosh the water as they carried the pail back to their room	DEL	
It wasn't long before word spread of the fish finning back and forth in the barracks bathtub	DEL	
But rather than insist on its removal, everyone seemed charmed by the presence of the unlikely pet	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Soon, all the bathers were transferring the fish to its pail while they washed, then sloshing him back over the lip of the tub when they'd finished	CON	When the others found out about the fish, they all considered it their pet.
They took to filling their bathrobe pockets with crumbs, chumming the water with bits of stale bread, encouraging the fish to rise, to mouth watery nonsense in their direction, fish-speak for good morning, or thank you, or you will find him soon, or she says she forgives you for not saying good-bye, or you will leave this place very soon, or whatever it was they imagined they needed to hear in order to get through this next day	DEL	
One of the little boys in the barracks thought he heard the fish say, Help me, I'm tired, I want to keep swimming	DEL	
So he went and found a knife and pressed the point into the fish's back, nudging him along	CON	Unknowingly, one boy kills the fish.
Again, the fish said, again	DEL	
Thank you, I'm so tired, I've forgotten how to move	DEL	
What are these marks on your back, the bathers asked, watching the fish lurch into his pail, turning like a capsized boat to show his bleached belly, taking much too long to right himself again	DEL	
I just wanted to help, the boy said, when the fish stopped moving altogether, his eyes clouded over, the color of old fat pooled in the bottom of the pan, his back stippled with gashes	DEL	
He seemed so quiet	DEL	
I was trying to help make sure he wasn't dead	DEL	
Maruta is missing from these stories, from their daily lives	DEL	
When her polio infection was eventually diagnosed, she was sent to the nearest hospital, outside the camp, kept for months in the children's ward, where, at the time, it was thought that it would be disruptive to the young patients' recovery and rehabilitation if their parents visited toooften	GEN	When Maruta was diagnosed with polio, she was put in a hospital.
They were barred from seeing her for more than a few hours each weekend	GEN	Livija and Emils could visit Maruta only shortly on the weekends.
They arranged for day passes, walked stiffly through the camp gates, past the guards, silently preparing themselves for this endless reenactment of separation, her tears, her building rage	DEL	
They are losing her, even though the nurses comment on her progress	CON	Maruta was very angry that she was alone in that hospital.
She will not look at them, tries to roll herself so that she faces the wall	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
As if she has decided it is somehow less painful to imagine they never came, because then, at least, she would not have to watch them leave her here, all by herself, again and again	DEL	
Back at the camp, they watched family after family leave	GEN	Over time, more and more families left the camp.
Their number now just a few hundred refugees: the old, the broken, those whose bodies did not work in the ways a sponsoring nation tends to deem of use	DEL	
Grudgingly, the United States had begun to reconsider its earlier <i>apprehension as to the type of persons who were inmates of the DP camps in Europe</i>	CON	The USA reviewed its position in regard to DPs.
And favored, in the end, were those refugees who could work as farmhands in the country's Midwest and its South, their prospects debated in such publications as <i>Congressional Quarterly</i> , a kind of scouting report for refugees: In Iowa, where the population has declined by 83,000 since 1940, a state survey showed that several thousand displaced persons could be welcomed there immediately	CON	Some states because of a decline in their population, decided they could take in refugees from Europe.
Kentucky is estimated to have a capacity to absorb over 5,000	CON	
In Minnesota Gov. Youngdahl's commission, which included representatives of agriculture, labor and welfare groups, has reported that the state has places now for 8,000	DEL	
A similar commission has been appointed by Gov. Aandahl in North Dakota—a state in which the population has declined by 148,417 since 1940	DEL	
Such news gave them the faintest possibility of hope—and enough specific detail—that they could, at last, begin to realistically imagine alternate existences for themselves	CON	Those still at the camp started to imagine their life in America.
They pulled atlases from the shelves of the camp libraries, made notes on elevation and climate, collected anecdotes from the camp's US-raised United Nations staff	DEL	
And from this jumble of amateur intelligence gathering, gossip and supposition, they built their own imagined realities of resettlement, revealed to themselves their desires and fears	DEL	
Maybe today they were wind-chapped and numb, disarticulating the dimpled carcasses of pullets at a poultry processing plant in northern Michigan	DEL	
Or, as when rumor spread of possible spots in California, maybe the next day, they were squinting against the sun, shedding burned skin like snakes, thinning the dates from medjool palms	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Iowa is about the same elevation as Latvia, they noted, and from there it was an easy walk to the cornfields, the flat, shimmering heat, like a hand pressed against the backs of their necks, the itchy perfume of hot loam and manure	DEL	
For my grandparents, it made no difference which future version of themselves they allowed themselves to hope for, or hope against	CON	Inara's grandparents were not invited by any state.
No invitations came—from Iowa, or California, or Minnesota, or anywhere else	CON	
Another year passed	CON	Livija and Emils spent another two years in the camp.
And then another	DEL	
As more and more refugees left, there was no more need for so many classes at the Baltic University and my grandfather received a letter that his services were no longer needed as a lecturer	DEL	
Maruta returned from the hospital to finally live at home again, pale and weak, and distant	DEL	Maruta returned to the camp from the hospital.
And then the seizures started	GEN	Maruta developed seizures.
As she pitched and twisted, her head ratcheting on the floor of their room, my grandmother trying to hold her, to still her, pressing Maruta to her stomach, swollen now with her own fourth child, they could feel their worry pitch and ratchet with her: what had the neighbors heard, would they tell someone, thinking perhaps that to highlight anyone else's unfitness might raise their prospects of resettlement, should spots ever come up again?	CON	Livija was pregnant again while in the camp.
And finally, the spots do come	DEL	
Under increasing pressure, the United States has agreed to admit 400,000 additional refugees for resettlement	CON	The USA agreed to take in 400 000 additional refugees after a careful check and consideration process.
There are conditions, as outlined in official documents and debriefings by staff from the International Refugee Organization, which has been created by the United Nations to take over administration of the camps and their refugees: To be eligible for consideration, each refugee requires a sponsor, someone stateside who will be willing to guarantee that there will be a place for the refugees to live, and that they will not take jobs from Americans	DEL	
Once a sponsor is secured, the refugee must then submit to a twenty-two-step screening process, their files reviewed by the FBI, by the Counter Intelligence Corps of the US Army, by the CIA, by the provost marshal general of the US Army in Germany, as well as by special liaison investigators from British Intelligence	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Their fingerprints will be checked against the fingerprint record center in Heidelberg, their names referenced against all the holdings of the Berlin Document Center, which houses all the Nazi files	DEL	
They must sit for tests measuring physical, mental and occupational fitness	DEL	
But perhaps most critical of all: this opportunity will end in a little less than two years, on December 31, 1951	CON	The DPs were given a time window of 2 years to fulfill the application.
Refugees must complete all these steps within that time	CON	
Only those refugees whose applications are approved before the deadline will be eligible for this resettlement offer	DEL	
This is what the officials told them	DEL	
Here was what the refugees heard: This is your last chance to leave	DEL	
Anything can derail an application: seizures, my grandparents note, trying to tamp down their fear	CON	Livija and other refugees feared that any small mistake could cause rejection.
As can misbehaving children	DEL	
An official complaint, no matter how small—whether for snatching an apple from one of the yards just beyond the camp, or breaking a window with a pebble cast out of boredom— could be enough, they have heard, to trigger a rejection on the grounds of moral turpitude	DEL	
To dream now was to dream only of your name pinned to the board announcing those who had reached the next stage: assignment to a refugee processing center	DEL	
This was the signal to pack whatever possessions you had accumulated—the single suit, the woven scarf, your copies of <i>Who Is Who at the Baltic University</i> and <i>An Economic History of Europe Since 1750</i> —and prepare to move to new quarters, where you will be held just long enough for officials from the IRO to monitor whether any possible illnesses incubating inside you might surface before you are scheduled to step aboard the ships or planes bound for the States	DEL	
Sometimes, when their names finally appeared, those bound for the processing centers spent a giddy last night raising black market toasts to their good fortune—to Amerika!—only to blink into morning, and despite open eyes, receive nothing in return, whatever sight they possessed, and along with it, whatever chance they had at relocation—because the country that had sponsored them did not agree to sponsor a blind person—stolen by the schnapps made in those secret stills they had spent so many years deliberately not-seeing	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Finally, the letters V-e-r-z-e-m-n-i-e-k-s arranged themselves upon the board, and the family decamped for the regional processing center in Wentorf, assigned to block 16, room 112	CON	Inara's grandparents also applied for relocation to the USA.
Once they reached the processing center, however, things stalled	DEL	
First, pertussis: the children of block 16 wheezing and whooping their way through the next six months, one after another, pausing only to retch in enamel basins when it felt as if their lungs might rip and tear	CON	In the processing stages, Livija's children fell ill which stalled the process.
Or was it measles: my grandmother running a brush through the baby's fever-matted hair, and there, on the scalp, a cheek, the soft side of a neck, the first inflamed splotches of red, freckling beneath the skin, then spreading	DEL	
Either way, they watched transport after transport leave without them as the baby recovered under quarantine	DEL	
And it is now, at this moment—as they remain suspended between final approval and infinite delay—the existing document trail skips	DEL	
But this much remains certain: with just eight months before the deadline, after getting as close to the final stage of approval as one can get, short of stepping on the plane, they were dispatched back to their original DP camp, removed from the rosters of the processing center	CON	8 months before the deadline, Livija and Emils's family was removed from the application and sent back to the camp.
All that is left is to imagine into the void, to stitch supposition from the whisper-thin facts still threading through living memory	DEL DEL	
Among the possible reasons they could have been sent back, their applications reset: Perhaps, they had a different sponsor at this stage, one who ultimately backed out, who had hesitations suddenly about what would be required to take responsibility for a family of refugees		
Or perhaps, they themselves backed out, overwhelmed by doubts about where they were to be sent—Sentanobia, Mississippi? —and what they imagined they would have to do there, and so they asked for a new sponsor	DEL	
More likely: My grandfather's military service had given someone, some-where, one last cause for pause	CON	Possibly, Emils's past as a member of the German army had an influence.
Western military authorities had ruled that to have served in the Latvian Legion was not the same as to have served with the Nazi SS	DEL	
And this is what had released soldiers like my grandfather from the prison camp, and cleared his entry into the DP camp	DEL	
The Nuremburg International Military Tribunal had been less clear	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
While the tribunal declared that the SS as a whole, including the Waffen SS, the formation to which the legion had been assigned, was a criminal organization, it also did not say that this was automatic cause for a call-up on war-crimes charges	DEL	
This was to be pursued and proven individually	DEL	
So ostensibly, if a person had been conscripted and had not committed any crimes, there was nothing to fear	DEL	
But because there were legion members who had happily volunteered for service and who had engaged in war crimes— members of the infamous band of killers who rode the blue buses through Latvia’s countryside helping to kill Jews, for example, had been absorbed into the earliest incarnation of the legion, and went on to fight only at the eastern front, just as the conscripts did—there remained confusion and unease about how to think of the legion	DEL	
There were rumors that applications from former legion members were being deliberately delayed	DEL	
More than likely, the truth was somewhere between, as reviewers tried to make sense of what could not be reduced to a simple uncomplicated answer	DEL	
Ultimately, the US Commission on Displaced Persons weighed in: all members of the legion should be considered to have been forcibly conscripted into service, and therefore, their service in it should not be grounds to deny their application	CON	However, the US side decided that those who fought in the Latvian Legion could not be considered as part of the Nazi.
And while it cleared the way for emigration, it also only further complicated things, forever lumping those who had most certainly committed war crimes with those who had not, so there would always be doubt about who was really who	DEL	
For three months, the family waited	ZERO	For three months Emils and Livija waited for clearance.
My grandfather ticking and pacing, mumbling words to himself that only he could understand, rough, corrugated, the intonation implying a sentiment that fell somewhere between prayer and castigation	DEL	
And then finally, on July 5, with just five months to spare before the deadline to receive final approval, they were granted a spot in the processing center again, the chance to start the clearance phase again	DEL	Five months before the deadline, the family was again at the processing center.
If they allowed themselves a new surge of hope, it was not much	DEL	
Not more than a rap on the lintel could bear	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They had a sponsor now, and a possible destination, everything laid out in a letter my grandfather carried with him everywhere, so that he could not lose it, a letter signed by a representative of the Lutheran World Federation, informing him of the family's assigned place of residence once they had been cleared for passage to America: the Lutheran Hospice in Tacoma, Washington	CON	The family was invited to Tacoma, Washington by the Lutheran World Federation.
I know from the catalog of the family's possessions drawn up by the IRO that among my grandfather's books was an atlas	DEL	
And as the day of their scheduled departure from Germany neared, they must have sought from it a tangible form of reassurance, that each time they flipped to the page that held the location of their future home, it was still there	DEL	
They sought concrete facts: soil conditions relative to Latvia, average winter temperatures	CON	In an atlas, they tried to find out all the information about their new home.
Until they thought they knew where they were headed	DEL	
But what of the things that cannot be quantified, geographies of experience and emotions that cannot be recorded or documented, only lived, and which form our most personal maps of home? That the air tasted of wood pulp and kelped water	DEL	
That they would sleep beneath the edge of the sky where the pilots from the nearby air force base pushed their jets past the speed of sound—new planes for the older boy to admire	DEL	
And then Maruta had another seizure	CON	Livija feared that Maruta's seizures could hinder their chances of leaving.
My grandmother was certain someone must have heard or seen something this time	DEL	
Please, she silently willed their neighbors	DEL	
Please don't tell anyone	DEL	
Not when we're this close	DEL	
They knew their daughter needed to see a doctor, but they were also so fearful of being delayed again, of anything that could cause them to miss the final deadline for resettlement	DEL	
They told themselves they had a better chance of getting Maruta the help she needed in America, if only they could get there	DEL	
And so, although it roused in them a deep distress, they agreed that they would spend the remaining hours in the camp pretending that nothing had happened, lying if necessary, and hiding Maruta from any possible scrutiny	CON	Livija decided to try to hide Maruta's condition from the doctors.
She waited as long as she could to bring Maruta into the medical screening room for the family's final preflight evaluation	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Any recent changes in her condition? the doctor asked	DEL	
No, my grandmother said, and stared hard at Maruta, as if with only her eyes she could fix her to the floor, will her limbs to stay limp	DEL	
She heard only the pounding of her own heart, a tripping rhythm	DEL	
Then, the scratching of doctor's pen: <i>Approved for emigration</i>	CON	Livija and Emils' family was finally cleared to relocate.
They carried three suitcases and one rucksack between them, the contents meticulously logged: one petticoat, five handkerchiefs, three spoons, two cups, one knife, one men's suit, three plates, one nightdress, two children's training pants, one apron, one hammer, one camera, two undershorts, three blankets, one bedsheet, one pair of child's overalls, one boy's coat, one scarf	DEL CON	The family went to start their new life with three suitcases of clothes and things and an English dictionary,
There are no toys listed, on the manifest, no jewelry and only one book—an English dictionary	CON	
This is what they would use to start their new life	DEL	
Even as they settled into their seats, their names and refugee numbers pinned to their chests, Livija watched Maruta closely, fearing that another seizure could come at any moment, and they would be ordered off the plane	CON	The family flew to the USA and up until take-off Livija feared that Maruta's condition could force them off the plane.
It was only when she felt the plane's nose catch and rise that she let herself believe that this was truly happening, that they were leaving	DEL	
What my father remembers: Not his mother's humming fear, but that their plane was a Lockheed Constellation, the first plane he had ever seen close up, the fuselage sleek and silver, a mirror in which he could see himself	DEL	
That the stewardess took him to meet the pilots in the cockpit	DEL	
That they touched down in Greenland to refuel the plane, and it was night, but he could not sleep and when he looked out the window, he saw the world as pinpricks of light	DEL	
He remembers New York, their port of entry, the smells of Penn Station, tar pitch, creosote, heated steel, pigeon dander	DEL	
He remembers their first apartment in downtown Tacoma, not far from the train station where they disembarked, the cascading brick of it, the steep creep of the stairs, the way the windows let in the honking wail of the tugs shouldering through Commencement Bay just across the street, the sea-scratched voices of the longshoremen commuting to work by rowboat	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
In my grandfather's billfold: a letter of recommendation from the former president of the Baltic University, the deepening creases an indication of how often he must have removed it and read it, trying to reacquaint himself with who he had been once, however briefly: I was always impressed by his ability and high qualification in the field of scientifics and teaching work, by his assiduity, and his present and friendly character in the relations with the members of the teaching staff	CON	Emils had with him a letter of recommendation on his teaching and scientific abilities from the university set up at the camp.
As it turned out, he had no cause to bring it out for anyone else	DEL	
Instead, in America, the former chair of economic theory with one eye was qualified to mop floors and wax linoleum, to pour molten metal into molds at the local foundry, to spread roofs with tar and to lay asphalt shingles	CON	Emils' and Livija's jobs in the USA were low-qualified physical work, as opposed to their office jobs they had had in Latvia.
My grandmother, the former accountant for Latvia's leading bacon export factory, took on piecework, sewing at home	DEL	
And when they could, together, with the children, whenever they weren't in school, they picked fruit from the local truck farms spread along the Puyallup Valley, in the shadow of Mt Rainier, urging little hands to gather flats of raspberries and strawberries, to lop the stems of daffodils bound for elaborate bouquets	DEL	
They saved	DEL	
Stubs of pencils, scraped sharp with the edges of knives	DEL	
Seeds collected from empty roadsides	DEL	
Thread	DEL	
Pennies	DEL	
They spoke of the present, using the old tongue, kept the construction of their sentences from reaching too far into the past	DEL	
But the past has a way of resisting silence, of asserting itself on the present without ever requiring a word	DEL	
I think of my father, the boy who watched war planes, who slept in the Luftwaffe barracks, who grew up to become an aerospace engineer, an expert in the composition of materials required to build planes and helicopters and shuttles and missiles, in particular glass	CON	Inara's father grew up to become an aerospace engineer.
He would devote years to developing a way to take this most brittle of materials to the very edge of breaking, yet remain strong enough to withstand the crushing forces of reentry	DEL	

CHAPTER 17

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
In the last year, my leg has healed so that only a small scar remains from the dog's bite, the size and color of a currant, like those a starling is busily beaking from the bushes at the edge of Ausma's yard	DEL	
Just look at the state of my garden, she says, as we break from our embrace	CON	Inara visits again and Ausma and Harijs welcome her warmly.
Do you even recognize it? Most days, my hip hurts so much, I can't do very much	DEL	
I have to keep stopping to rest	DEL	
My souvenir from Siberia, all these pains in my body	DEL	
Harijs emerges from the barn, trailing wisps of hay	DEL	
You! he says, as I kiss his cheek	DEL	
All the way from America! Tell me, how long did it take you to get here? Did you fly here, through the sky, or did you come by boat?	DEL	
You can't be serious, Ausma says	DEL	
She came by airplane! It would take weeks if she went by sea! Tell me, do you have the same trees in America?	DEL	
Ausma shakes her head	DEL	
You can't really expect her to answer that—it's different, of course, and the same	DEL	
What about wolves—do you have wolves in America? That's enough with your silly questions, Ausma says	DEL	
Next thing, you'll be telling her about all the times you nearly died	DEL	
I'm sure she's tired, let's make tea	DEL	
Ausma has placed a vase of mock orange next to my bed and laid at my feet a linen blanket made on my great-grandmother's loom	DEL	
But sleep refuses to come	CON	Inara is restless after arriving at Ausma's.
I listen to the cows cudding grass outside my window	DEL	
Then the cats spitting and fighting somewhere beyond the cows, biting one another's backs, releasing puffs of fur for the chickens to bob over come morning	DEL	
Then: the sound of something howling, a piercing monotone hymn that lasts for what feels like hours	DEL	
How did you sleep? Asuma asks the next morning, placing a cup of tea on the table in front of me	DEL	
Did you hear the dogs howling? I ask	DEL	
Dogs? says Ausma, I didn't hear any dogs	DEL	
A few days later, in the archives of the local museum, I find a stack of transcripts from interviews conducted with survivors of the same mass exile that included Ausma	CON	Inara finds records of school children questionnaires filled in by the survivors of exile.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They appear to be part of a school project, village children assigned to record the memories of local deportees	DEL	
Each interview includes a questionnaire	DEL	
<i>Did you know anyone who died? Yes, a man circles</i>	DEL	
<i>Who? My father</i>	DEL	
<i>How did the person die? Choose one</i>	DEL	
<i>Suicide, he circles</i>	DEL	
One woman, when invited to describe what life was like for her in Siberia, says only this: <i>We lived under pine trees, and once, a wolf bit me</i>	DEL	
My cousin— she of the exaltation of cows—has taken a job for the summer as a rural mail carrier	CON	Inara's cousin has a degree in economics, but is hesitant to leave the countryside.
She has just graduated university with a degree in economics, but she is not sure she wants to leave the countryside, even though there is no call here for the theories of marketing she spent all those years memorizing	CON	
A relative in England has invited her to come stay with her, to see what jobs she might find there	DEL	
But she is hesitant	DEL	
In a city, she says, can you ever be alone, the way you're alone here, with only quiet? Where do you go to remind yourself you and your problems are small? I don't think I want to get too far from that feeling	CON	She is too attached to the nature to imagine a life where she is not near it.
I want to be able to go walking in the fields by myself, looking for wild caraway, and never see another soul, except maybe my cows	CON	
So for now she drives her mail truck over roads built from nothing more than what is there, impacted topsoil and muck, and she hopes maybe her stuttering tires might jar a decision loose inside her	DEL	
The box of mail on the seat next to her reveals the existence of a nowhere that even she—who has lived in this countryside her whole life, who celebrates its remoteness, its secret caraway fields and cow-quiet—had no idea existed	GEN	The cousin works as a postman.
These are not houses, she thinks	DEL	
They are burrows	DEL	
Or dens	DEL	
Holes above ground, through which it is possible to slip from the surface of this life into a forgotten one, where spluttering candles provide the only light; where bed is a greasy blanket on the floor; where what at first seems a carpet is in fact a thick layer of fleas	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Gradually, from the dim, other occupants materialize: old men and old women, or not yet old men and women made old by work or by drink, it is so difficult to tell, their faces as haggard and featureless as a turnip at the bottom of a crate that has been left too long in one of the subterranean root cellars that are a feature of every country home	CON	There in the countryside many people live in dirt and darkness.
They ask her to open and read aloud the letters that come in their names, and whether this is because their eyes are no good, or they have never learned to make sense of the marks on the page, she doesn't ask	DEL	
Sometimes, they implore her to take their signed government checks, their pensions back to the village to cash, and she can bring the money the next time she comes with the mail	DEL	
And maybe these groceries, too? Can you write it down if I tell you?	CON	The people rely on the postman as their only contact person.
One day, I accompany my cousin on her route	DEL	
There are miles of brooding woods, roads so dusty she must at times turn on her wipers to see	DEL	
We visit solemn, stout apartment blocks, Googie-gilled and cold-eyed as carp, like the blocks of developments you see in the capital, mile upon mile of Stalinist-era architecture, stretched along promenades wide enough to accommodate several lanes of Zaporozhets cars, some of the last visible reminders of the Communist years	CON	In the countryside, there are apartment blocks built during the Soviet era.
Specifically: the promise of cheap, fair, practical housing for everyone	DEL	
They are also reminders of the unanticipated consequences of exile	DEL	
One day, it occurred to Soviet officials that between all those killed or wounded in the war, and all those who fled, and all those they had already banished to Siberia, they would never be able to find the kind of replacement labor required to run the country's new collective farms in Latvia alone	CON	After many people were killed or exiled, the collective farms needed workforce and the party relocated people from other countries to the countryside.
So they reached across the republics, gathered up workers and scattered them throughout the countryside	CON	
And they raised hundreds of these developments to house them	DEL	
The problem was that many of these workers had never farmed before, nor did they find the idea particularly enjoyable	DEL	
To them the landscape was not bucolic	DEL	
It was grim, bewildering, backward-looking	DEL	
They were city dwellers, marooned between fields of sugar beets and goat-trampled bracken	CON	Often, the people relocated did not like and had no skill of farming.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
At a distance, it's easy to feel a kind of smug disdain for these Soviet-era apartments that remain	DEL	
But up close, following my cousin as she drops women's magazines through mail slots, hand-delivers a government check to a woman who half-hides behind her front door, as the television in the background sings the theme of a Russian game show, they strike me as strangely beautiful, the way all attempts at a carefully calculated uniformity are quietly interrupted by the fragile, yet persistent business of everyday life: the balconies flagged with laundry-line semaphores that wink <i>fuchsia, chevron, Spice Girls, tropical paradise, black lace</i> ; the naughty graffiti in English written in too much haste and left to drool down the pebble-dash walls, a preteen laughing too hard at his own sad-silly dirty joke—"Poop/fuck"; the potted sweet peas that throw legs over railings; the cardboard boxes left turned on their sides in the bushes with pillows stuffed inside—thrones upon which the stray cats can perch like queens and tooth their chicken bones or preen their sable coats; the old woman in sandals and kneesocks who brooms with twigs the surrounding dirt footpaths in patterns that resemble clouded skies	CON	Yet, the people made a life in the new place as good as they could.
The route also takes us past the old family farm, where we park the truck and wade into the weeds so that I can monitor the continued and uninterrupted progress of its unmaking	GEN	Inara visits <i>Lembi</i> again, five years since the first time.
It's now been five years since my first visit, and the floor has begun buckling upward, toward the sky, then folding back upon itself like rock from some great prehistoric rift	CON	
The roof that remains bows so low in places that it almost, but does not quite touch the ruptured seams of the floor	CON	The house has decayed further.
Do you think it's possible houses have something that's equivalent to a soul? my cousin asks	DEL	
Something that's left in the house when someone is born there, or someone dies there? I don't want to ruin her question with an answer	DEL	
So instead I try to list all our ancestors who were born and who died at <i>Lembi</i>	DEL	
And they were the last, she says	CON	Inara and her cousin consider how <i>Lembi</i> has seen the last of its people.
She works the truck down a narrow road made from earth that threads through forest so stolid and imposing and endlessly repeating that I imagine for a moment that we must be driving in circles	DEL	
The soil beneath the trees is undisturbed, soft with the memories of centuries of rotted things	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The light that filters through the branches is silvered like lichen, and feels as if it's never before been taken into human lungs	DEL	
Under the truck's wheels, the road spits dust like a string of letters appearing on a blank page	DEL	
Otherwise, nothing stirs	DEL	
After ten minutes of driving, we come to a stop next to a makeshift mailbox nailed to a hemlock that nods its branches at our approach	DEL	
My cousin explains that there is a very old woman who lives all alone in a hut hidden in this forest, built only from what it has given her	CON	The women deliver mail to a postbox belonging to a woman who lives alone in the woods in a self-imposed exile.
Once a week, she hikes several kilometers to this box to check for word from the world beyond hers	DEL	
No one knows the reason for her self-imposed exile, just that something happened that made her choose the company of pines over people, the language of birds and stones and water over human speech	DEL	
<i>Other people are related to other people Me, poor me, I am kin only to trees: Ash, maple, oak They are my blood, they love me like family</i>	DEL	
The old stories hold that the forest is a place out of time, where the normal rules of language and comprehension and knowledge do not apply, where miracles are possible	CON	In Latvian folklore, forest is a magical, powerful place.
Not miracles in the religious sense, but holy in their own way, like the no-weight of a vole's skeleton, the murmuring of old leaves that twist in the wind like withered tongues	DEL	
And maybe this is why I find myself debating whether I should ask my cousin to let me out here, so that I can go and find this woman who must have been alive in the war, who is old enough to know what it is to feel pain, and be the source of another's pain	DEL	
But even if I could follow the smell of bramble fire to her open door and a crow-eyed welcome, an old head bobbing, I already know that the question I most want to ask her, this woman who has so deliberately lost herself in these woods which I cannot see my way through, is also my only answer, an instruction, a command, a plea: how to live with this hurt	DEL	

## CHAPTER 18

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Was your life in Siberia all sadness?	CON	Inara and Ausma talk about Siberia.
Not at all	DEL	
People laughed	CON	Ausma says that life was not always sad.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
There were dances	DEL	
Did you feel joy?	DEL	
Now, I wouldn't go that far	DEL	
If it was possible to be grateful for a job to which you are sentenced, Ausma was grateful for the herding assignment: a mob of ewes, 350 solid solemn things, spotted, their hindquarters like two heavy half-moons	GEN	At first, Ausma worked as a shepherd to 350 sheep.
A new breed for Siberia, she had heard, brought from one of the more mountainous republics in the west, on the assumption they would introduce, with their tough, scrubby bloodlines, a disposition toward hardiness	DEL	
Her job was to trail them into the fields, so they could nose away the snow in search of fresh growth	DEL	
They had been locked away for the worst of the winter and were eager to graze, grunting happily to themselves	DEL	
She watched them eat, wriggling and pink, recently skinned of their long heavy coats	DEL	
At least the job was familiar, one of the first chores given to a child in the Latvian countryside, dispatched to the fields almost as soon she can walk with a lunch pail in her hand and the latest generation in a long line of soft-mouthed farm dogs—jaws like a farrier's nippers, pinching but never puncturing flesh—trotting behind	CON	Ausma, as all Latvian children of the countryside, was used to shepherding sheep.
There were no fences, not then, not now, not ever, and so it was up to child and dog to keep the animals from following some unnamable bovine instinct into the underbrush or bogs	DEL	
The quickest children learned to use the landscape to pen the animals, to drive them lowing to a V in the river, so that the waters can mind them on three sides	DEL	
Then all that is left for you is to make a bed in the grass behind them, stitching colored mittens or making whistles from the grass	DEL	
Ausma had just started to settle in when she saw one sheep drop	CON	The sheep were shorn too early and could not take the cold, so Ausma carried them one by one to the barn.
Followed by another and another, until the whole herd was keeling	DEL	
They would not rise, no matter how hard she tugged	DEL	
Slowly, it became clear to her that the collective had shorn their coats according to the schedule they had always followed with the sheep who had already lived in this region for a long time	DEL	
But this new breed was not accustomed to the scalding cold that still lingered as winter turned toward spring	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Now, they were too numb-legged to hobble the kilometer back to the barn on their own	DEL	
She would have no choice but to carry them back herself, one at a time	DEL	
Then maybe she could take them to the back in the barn, cover them with her body, rub their legs between her chapped and cracking palms	DEL	
She heaved the first sheep over her shoulders and began her staggered walk	DEL	
After the first hour, she could no longer feel her arms	DEL	
After the second hour, she bawled along with the ewes	DEL	
The snowmelt could not come fast enough, and even if it brought mud and mosquitoes, at least it meant the sheep could carry themselves home again, and she could follow their heavy hoofed gait through the slop, looking for what the cold had concealed: bird cherry, buttercup, currant, peony, violet	DEL	
Then: could it really be winter again so quickly? Out into the snow one more—there is no escape from it—this time to the forests, a slice of bread in her coat pocket for lunch; within minutes it would be frozen	CON	The weather was dominated by cold and winters stayed for long.
Sometimes, if hunger’s nattering reached a particularly incessant pitch, she learned to snap off small pieces and then set them on her tongue to melt as she sawed	CON	Ausma also worked in the forest, sawing trees with other women.
Otherwise, she would save it for the fire set later in the old metal barrel, where workers were allowed to come and stand for a few moments and unthaw their hands, release the shape of the saw’s grip	CON	There was not enough to eat.
There she would hold the bread over the fire until her fingers whinged and smoked	DEL	
Those laboring alongside her were mostly women	CON	
All the men had been killed in the war or surrendered too many limbs to field surgeons’ saws to manage the most demanding assignments, like forestry duty	DEL	
Mornings, before sunrise, she and the other women stomped deep into the taiga, where they were expected to spend the next ten hours felling pines or birch, then stacking the wood	DEL	
Ausma could barely lift the axe they gave her; hungry, weak, she quickly fell behind	CON	
No work, no grain, the brigade captains scolded	DEL	
What would it be like to lie down and never get up again, to rest like the body at the edge of the rail tracks, slowly shedding all ties to the living	DEL	
She had given up all hope of her own life to come here and care for her brother and mother, as she had done back at the farm	CON	Ausma was the only one working to support her family.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She had imagined, if she could endure that, this could not ask her to do anything harder than what she had already done	DEL	
But already, this quickly, it was beyond her	DEL	
And now, in her failure, she was certain she had sentenced the three of them to their deaths	DEL	
Oh, sister, her brother said, when she came home, unable to lift her arms higher than her waist, don't cry	DEL	
I can't go back there, she said, but if I don't, we're all lost	CON	The work was extremely difficult, almost unbearable.
No, we're not, he said, you can do this	DEL	
You make it sound so simple, she said	DEL	
It is, he said, you just need the right axe	DEL	
He might not be able to handle hard labor, but sensing that survival in the settlements was not just about what your body could endure, but also about forging connections, he had asked for a job that suited a one-legged man, and had been assigned to watch the horse barns at night	CON	Ausma's brother had found a job watching the horse barns at night.
In this way he had made friends with the blacksmith	ZERO	Janis had made friends with the blacksmith and got her sister a lighter axe.
I'll take care of it, he said	DEL	
And he did, bringing her a modified axe that was lighter, easier to handle	DEL	
She kept up with the others after that, swung as cleanly as if splitting head from neck	DEL	
She taught her body how to remain in one place, while her mind drifted to another	DEL	
Those on forest duty often worked in two-week shifts, and sometimes, at night, as the trees led them farther into the taiga, they boarded in abandoned settlements near its edges	DEL	
The houses where they stayed were so empty their voices echoed	DEL	
Usually there was a stove, and someone who offered to stay awake in order to keep stoking it, but it was impossible for any of them to hold their eyes open long	CON	The women worked so hard they could not do anything else afterwards.
It was too cold to wash, too cold to undress	DEL	
After a few days, the smell warned them even before they could register the dancing at their jackets' seams and along their collars—a building stench like leaves left in gutters to rot	DEL	
When she finally came home at the end of her rotation, her mother would not let her through the door	CON	After each shift, the mother boiled Ausma's clothes to get rid of insects.
Not with all your friends, too, Alma said	DEL	
So Ausma stripped everything off in the yard, cold pricking her exposed skin like the touch of nettles' leaves	DEL	
She dropped her skirt and coat into a metal pail that her mother filled with water	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Finally, they boiled everything for several hours on the makeshift stove they built outside from bricks of river mud, until tiny fawn-colored specks scummed the surface	DEL	
What they ate: Slices of cold-blackened potatoes	CON	They ate whatever they could find in the scarce nature.
Tiny translucent fish, no more than a swallow, collected from the creek, using sheets as nets	DEL	
Nuts husked from the cones of the Siberian cedars, to be savored under the tongue like hard candy, smoky and resinous, like tasting the dregs of an old fire	DEL	
Birch seeds, catkins	DEL	
They boiled grass and the leaves of black currants and drank it like tea	DEL	
In the early days, when they still lived with the Russian exile, the one who was sorry this had happened to them, she would set aside a shot of milk for Ausma, thin and green, but still, an extra portion	CON	While the family still lived with the woman who took them in, she sometimes gave Ausma some real food.
To help you saw faster, she said	DEL	
And when Ausma slopped scalding water over her foot, and had to miss several days' work, the woman brought a bowl to her bed	DEL	
What is it? Ausma asked	DEL	
Something special, the woman said, to help you heal faster	DEL	
Potatoes, Ausma saw, laced with cream	DEL	
Not the usual thin filings of frozen milk, scraped from the top of the pails they kept out in the cold	DEL	
Real cream	DEL	
Thick like sap, pleasingly sour, like the first bite of a cherry	DEL	
For years, Ausma would remember it as the best meal she had ever eaten	DEL	
Those who were sent to the settlements across the river and never came back—there were stories that toward the end they ate nettles, scraped the skin from birch trees with their teeth as if stripping meat from bones	CON	There were talks that people in despair for food ate tree bark, lice, ticks.
And maybe it's true they held rocks in their mouths, worrying them with their tongues	DEL	
But did they really dig the ticks from their arms with their nails, snap their teeth at the circling midges, like dogs? Nothing is impossible when nothing is possible	DEL	
Ausma knows this now	DEL	
But it is easier to believe that maybe, first, they ate the lice	DEL	
What they wore: Whatever they had time to pack	DEL	
Most of them had no time to pack	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
In the earliest weeks, they wore whatever they were wearing when the soldiers came for them	CON	Most of the exiles arrived in Siberia with only the clothes they were wearing.
Sometimes, the soldiers took pity on those who were too stunned to assemble a case and dumped the contents of drawers onto sheets, then pressed the bundles into reluctant hands	DEL	
This is what they did for Ausma's mother	CON	To Ausma's mother, the soldiers had packed some clothes.
She had stood, rooted, unmoving, because she imagined they would soon shoot her, so what was the point of doing anything at all	CON	
One woman was said to have made her Siberian debut in a suit and heels	DEL	
There are stories of children who came barefoot, in nightdresses	DEL	
Where once she dreamed of a jacket trimmed with a bit of fur, a hat with one winging feather like Livija wore when Ausma went to visit her in Riga, new items of desire emerge: Telogreika jackets, turgid, ponderous things, unsentimental, gray as rat fur or green as spoiled meat, first tested by Red Army soldiers dug into the trenches around a starving Stalingrad, or gunning trucks across Lake Ladoga's icy expanse, trying to outrace German bombers	CON	Very, very warm, soldier clothes and boots were necessary to survive in the cold weather.
Now the uniform of the stout aunties with their giant heaving bosoms cursing tractors through the Siberian muck	DEL	
Valenki boots, long the footwear of Russia's unfortunates, and also a synonym for suffering, stupidity	DEL	
<i>Dumb as a valenki</i> , the Russians said when they harbored particular vitriol for someone	DEL	
For the exiles, valenkis meant their only defense against the creeping black of frostbite	DEL	
They were made from nothing more than felt, wool, oily with lanolin, boiled and rolled into the shape of galoshes by hands red and blistered from the sulfuric acid dips that make the fibers shrink and mat	DEL	
The boots were cumbersome, quick to suck up moisture, so that it seemed as if you are walking with whole sheep strapped to your feet	CON	The work boots – valenki sucked up water and got heavy and loose, but as they dried they could not be removed.
You could tell a valenki wearer from a distance simply by her gait: slow, sluggish, heavy-soled	DEL	
When the wet boots dried, they shrank to the shape of the wearer's foot	DEL	
Like hinges rusted shut, they could not be budged	DEL	
If you worked in valenkis, you would likely sleep in valenkis	CON	Generally, people did not take them off.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
More than a few were buried in valenkis	DEL	
Late summer, the time of harvest	DEL	
She swung from the cab of a moving combine, intending to drop at a run, so that she could move to the next lane of mown hay	CON	Ausma got a serious back injury during work.
Instead, she landed on her back	CON	
She felt something slip, the pop of gristle	CON	
She didn't tell anyone, simply removed the kerchief from her head and used it to bind her ribs and her back, to try to hold in the pain	DEL	
No work, she told herself, no rations	DEL	
But as she tried to fork the hay into piles, she felt her vision dip and flutter, then shrink to a pinprick	DEL	
She wasn't conscious when they brought her home in the back of one of the haywagons	DEL	
Her brother found her, curled on her side in the corner of the kitchen where they lived	DEL	
If I told you you could have four hands and three legs, could you get up? he said	CON	Her brother offered to half-help her while she heals so they could continue to get rations.
I can't go very fast, but between us, until you heal, we can be almost one person	DEL	
So she grew four hands and three legs, though it hurt	DEL	
It hurt her to watch her brother struggling with the rake, his crutch slipping	DEL	
It hurt her to watch him pitch and tumble	DEL	
She couldn't decide if watching this hurt as much as the pain in her back, but she also knew she needed to make quota, so that they could eat, so she just let the hurts accumulate, like the piles of wild ryegrass and clover slowly rising in front of them, becoming something thick, repetitive, never-ending	DEL	
Rick of hay, rick of hay	DEL	
Time unraveled, like the strands of the blanket that Ausma had thought to bring from what remained in the farmhouse	DEL	
Thread by thread, gray, green, yellow, brown, her mother unloosened the weave, then summoned from the new-old skeins sets of mittens	DEL	
Her needles coaxed patterns from memory, calling on what her mother had taught her, as her mother had taught her before that, the ancient symbols, a ledger of fates: Moon, morning star, sun.	DEL	
Sun, who, it is said, among other things, keeps special watch over the unlucky	DEL	
They were still not allowed to leave the settlement	CON	Time passed, but they were not allowed to leave.
But a neighbor, who had received permission to travel to the market in Moscow to sell her own wares, offered to take the mittens and bring back whatever money they might make	CON	A neighbor sold Alma's mittens in Moscow and brought back good money to her.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Whether it was the help of the Sun, or the intricacy of Alma's handwork, all the mittens sold, and the friend returned with money, enough money that they were able to negotiate the purchase of a piglet from one of their fellow kolkholzniks	GEN	The family bought a piglet.
Really, it was not a pig they were buying, but the chance to believe they might have a life that was, as Ausma's mother put it, <i>half-human</i>	GEN	The family believed the piglet could be the first step to a <i>half-human</i> life.
And yet it was a pig they bought, in the end	DEL	
Just not a sow	DEL	
Sows were acceptable for private use; hogs summoned a tax	CON	The piglet was a hog and they had to pay a fine giving away all their money.
So it was not a pig they bought, but a penalty	DEL	
Two thousand rubles, due now	DEL	
No more blanket to unravel, no more mittens to bring to market	DEL	
Nothing left to trade to pay the fine	DEL	
How do you live less than half a life? Will potato peelings buried deep enough eventually sprout? What does it mean when you open your mouth to speak and your words smell of bitter pith, fruit turning? A letter, slipped in Alma's hands, helped them change the answers they might have given	CON	Miraculously, the family received some money per post from Gulbene.
<i>I am writing to tell you that you are still owed money for milk that you delivered to the dairy cooperative in Gulbene before you had to go away</i>	DEL	
<i>I am sorry that it has taken me so long to find your new address</i>	DEL	
<i>I have enclosed the amount you are due and will make a note in my ledger</i>	DEL	
And now, one more entry for the ledger of fates: Cow	CON	The money they received was enough to pay the fine and buy a cow.
Even after they had settled the fine for owning the hog, they still had enough left over from what the head of the dairy back in their hometown had sent them to purchase their own heifer	CON	
Only one hundred rubles, because she was old and her teats were shriveled	DEL	
But they spoke to her, told her how much she meant to them, sang her songs about sun and green fields	CON	The cow was a lifeline to the family and they treated her like one, and she delivered.
They named her Gauja, after one of the major rivers running through their region of Latvia	DEL	
They fed her cedar nuts and shoots of grass they collected by hand, spooned her currant-leaf tea	DEL	
Soon, she was singing, too, the milk from her teats sounding each morning in the tin that once held the old farm's honey	DEL	
Then they would pour the milk into bowls, and set the bowls outside to freeze	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Then they would tip the frozen bowls into pillowcases, releasing the bricks of milk	DEL	
By then, they had received permission to travel as far as Tomsk, on day passes	CON	They had received permission to travel and Ausma began selling the milk in the market.
And so, once they had set aside a little milk for themselves, Ausma began to haul the pillowcases to market	CON	
First, she registered with the settlement's security office	DEL	
Then, she walked to the nearest rail line, about five kilometers away	DEL	
Sometimes she could catch a ride on one of the collective wagons, oxen already plodding that way	DEL	
She had no money to buy a ticket, so when she found a departing train, she latched herself to its side	DEL	
She rode this way for the thirty-kilometer journey to Tomsk, like a tick, her cheeks reddening, then blackening in the battering wind	CON	In the cold winter, Ausma had no money for a ticket, so she held on to the side of a train car.
After cow: Then came little house	CON	Having started to earn something, the family moved into a house of their own.
Long abandoned, it sat at the edge of the river where they hunted the waters with their makeshift nets	DEL	
Their Russian friend, the exile who had let them sleep in a corner in her kitchen, had told them about it	DEL	
Now that you are making a little money, you should find a place of your own, she said	DEL	
No one will mind if you use this old house, so long as you make all the repairs	DEL	
They redaubed the walls with mud gathered from the creek bed	CON	They repaired the house so that it was livable in.
It didn't take long with only one room	DEL	
Ausma and her mother shared the only bed; her brother made a nest of blankets on the floor, near the stove	DEL	
Collectively, the exiles were like fish trapped beneath the ice of the river in winter, suspended in this new half-life, caught between	DEL	
They did not want to be here, but they were here	DEL	
So what could they do but collect the seeds of wild geranium and cosmos from the woods and meadows, then plant them in window boxes, scatter them behind the outdoor stove so that at least while they cook they can see something beautiful	CON	Unable to leave, they tried to live the best they could, planting flowers and played make-pretend with their food.
They played at picnics, putting blankets down beneath birch trees that looked so much like the ones they once knew	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They said, Here, this is saffron bread, and everyone chewed the hard loaf made with flour doctored from the sawdust of birch bark or crushed dried clover, and laughed and pantomimed delight	DEL	
They bined wild hops, brewed beer, fermented foraged fruits	DEL	
Boys, looped, took a bicycle from the collective equipment area, and nested it in the crook of a tree	DEL	
It made no sense, which was exactly why it seemed so brilliant at the time	DEL	
Dangling from the branches, they toasted first everything—To bicycles!—then everyone they could think of	DEL	
To Ausma! She ignored the boys who shrilled at her, like birds	CON	Ausma did not think of romance, she only thought about work.
Kept her distance	DEL	
She didn't have time for that	DEL	
She barely had time to sleep	DEL	
What she did for distraction: Sometimes, at night, if she was not too exhausted, Ausma would practice embroidering scraps of fabric in the style her Russian friend had taught her: elaborate still-lives of tulips and lilacs; a composition of meadow clover, which, when viewed closely, rewarded the attentive with a secret single stem of four leaves	CON	When she had the strength, Ausma embroidered.
Occasionally, she tried to read	DEL	
When they were finally allowed to receive packages from home, her godmother sent her a novel, a sprawling retelling of the history of Riga	DEL	
Still, there were nights when she could only bring herself to read a single word before she would shut the covers, unsure of how long she would need to make these pages last, if this was the only book she would ever have again	DEL	
Other exiles drew heated nails down scraps of larch to serve as headstones	CON	People re-used anything to make some household items.
They coaxed chess sets from bone, called instruments from shoe leather and strands of their own hair	CON	
They picked apart bandages to crochet shawls and decorative collars that lay on their shoulders, spotted with red	CON	
For some, bark doubled as paper, unwound from the birch trunks with callused hands	CON	
On scraps the size of postcards, they nubbed messages to relatives in Latvia, never forgetting the censors' eyes	CON	
They wrote: <i>Warm summer wishes!</i> They wrote: <i>Remember your friends in faraway Siberia</i>	DEL	
One night, Ausma went to see a movie in the collective's community center	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Dumb with fatigue, Ausma sat in the back with Stalin's portrait, her legs numbing on a folding chair, and she stared at the images flickering on the wall in front of her	CON	One night, Ausma went to see a movie at the community center and was saddened to realize she had not recognized the Latvian language and landscape.
She did not know how long she had been watching before it occurred to her that this was in fact a Latvian film, set in Latvia, and all the actors were speaking in Latvian	DEL	
Rather than stir something inside her, this realization saddened her	DEL	
How much did that old life really ever matter if she could forget it so quickly? And then, one March, the month of their taking, now four years on, as the ice began to release its grip and the rivers and streams began to tremble, a sound so loud as to be mistaken for the vibration of train wheels rushing along tracks, it so happened, that at the same time, nearly four thousand kilometers away, in Moscow, the man who had engineered their taking, and so many other takings, all those trains in motion, fell to his bedroom floor, next to a copy of <i>Pravda</i> and his pocket watch	DEL	
A blood vessel in his head burst, then pooled	DEL	
When help finally arrived, it was too late to undo the damage	DEL	
It is difficult to find a capable doctor when you have already banished so many	DEL	
Across Siberia, the exiles were gathered in party halls and community centers, as the news from Moscow spread: Stalin is dead	GEN	4 years into their exile, the one responsible for their exile – Stalin – died.
There were aunties who wailed and smashed their chests against the glass of the community center portraits, their breasts level with his mustache	DEL	
But later, after those aunties left, there were others who flipped the portrait over so they did not have to look at that mustache again	DEL	
With the death of the architect of their exile, the banished began to compose letters, like this one penned by my great-grandmother in 1952, asking to exist again: <i>Please, your Honorable Minister</i>	CON	With Stalin dead, the exiles, including Ausma's family, began to plea for their return.
<i>My family and I were exiled to Siberia in 1949</i>	DEL	
<i>There are only three of us here: myself, my son and my daughter</i>	DEL	
<i>I am old and ill, and can no longer work</i>	DEL	
<i>My son tries to work, but he is an invalid, missing his left leg</i>	DEL	
<i>We have never been members of a seditious group</i>	DEL	
<i>My dearest wish is to be able to return to my home to sleep at last in the sandy soil that also holds my ancestors</i>	DEL	
<i>I beg your permission to do this</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
I find this letter in a file in an unmarked warehouse located at the end of an unpaved service road in Riga, hidden behind the bulk of an old factory where fifteen thousand workers—the same number of people sent to Siberia in the first mass exile, in 1941—once assembled Soviet transistor radios and record players the size of kitchen tables	DEL	
Now the factory building is shuttered, for rent	DEL	
The brokers kindly refer to it in promotional literature as a fine example of brutalist architecture	DEL	
Anyone searching for the records of those who disappeared in the days of Siberia will be told that they must first find the factory; only then will they find the warehouse that now holds all the files from that time, the secret orders, all those handwritten letters addressed to <i>Dear Honorable Ministers</i> , like the one signed by my great-grandmother Alma	DEL	
Once, when I asked Ausma if she knew why they were sent away, the reason for all that they had suffered, she answered immediately: <i>The bees</i>	DEL	
After the war, when the process of collectivization began, and property lines were being redrawn, possessions divided, a man who lived not far from <i>Lembi</i> , someone suddenly of some authority in the Party, initiated his own plan to redistribute local wealth and personally requested the delivery of <i>Lembi's</i> hives to his own farm	CON	When collectivization began, a member of the Party wanted to take <i>Lembi's</i> bees to himself, which Ausma's father did not agree to.
To which my great-grandfather was said to reply: Not even when I am dead	DEL	
Four years after his fall from the loft, his widow and his son and his daughter were on a train to Siberia under secret order	DEL	
And all the hives from <i>Lembi</i> were spotted on the Party official's land	CON	After the family was exiled, the bees appeared on the Party member's land.
In the family's declassified file in Riga, there is no mention of the bees	DEL	
Only a document signed by officials from Stalin's Ministry for State Security that appears in the file of anyone who was ever sent to Siberia as a special exile	DEL	
It says: <u>STRICTLY SECRET</u> And: DESIGNATED FOR EXILE And: EVIDENCE: _____ ( <i>Choose one: bandit, nationalist, kulak</i> ) <i>Kulak</i> was the most popular choice, filling in the blank 29,030 times	CON	Inara finds that the family was exiled for being kulak – being too rich in owning too much land.
It means wealthy peasant, as in: <i>The kulak possesses 33 hectares of land, 2 horses, 19 cows, 12 pigs and 3 paid laborers</i>	CON	
This was the reason selected for my family	CON	
That they were peasants—who owned too much land	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
In the end, one could say that the farm that my great-great-grandfather struggled to buy so the family could remain connected to the land of their ancestors became the very reason they would ultimately be exiled from it	DEL	
And how thin the line that distinguishes one wealthy peasant from another, those who were deemed threatening enough to be taken from those who were deemed safe enough to leave	CON	The family were deemed kulak only by a slight margin – three hectares.
Only three hectares, in my family’s case—the equivalent of seven and a half acres	DEL	
Or, by another accounting: One brood of hens	DEL	
On that day, years ago, when my great-grandmother demanded that her husband evict his cousin and the cousin’s wife, and the wife’s maurauding chickens, from <i>Lembi</i> , that meant buying up the cousin’s share of land in order to get him to leave	CON	Years ago, Ausma’s parents had taken over a cousin’s land which totaled the size of the land over the line.
The cousin’s holding and my great-grandfather’s existing holdings added up to thirty-three hectares	DEL	
And a kulak becomes a kulak for every hectare over thirty	DEL	
As for my great-grandmother’s plea, the files indicate it was not answered until 1956	CON	Another 4 years later, the family was allowed to return to Latvia.
When a response was finally issued, it came by form letter, curt, bureaucratic, unemotional: <i>You may return to your original place of residence</i>	CON	
They sold everything they had accumulated—Gauja, the crude furniture they had built, the bed	GEN	They sold all their possessions and bought train tickets home.
They used the profits to buy train tickets	DEL	
A free ride here, said Ausma	DEL	
Now we pay our own way home	DEL	
Ausma kept a little money back to buy a bolt of fabric to take to a woman in the settlement, someone too old and crippled to work for the collective but who supported herself by taking on small sewing jobs	CON	Ausma wanted to dress up for the occasion of homecoming.
She asked the woman to make her a dress	DEL	
To make up for the one that she had been measured for by the seamstress back in Gulbene, all those years ago, on the day everyone was taken, and which she had never collected	DEL	
She always wondered what had happened to that dress, which her mother had hoped would save her	DEL	
Their first train journey had taken three weeks	DEL	
This time, they reached the Latvian border in just fourteen days	CON	After a two-weeks train ride, the family was back in the same station in Gulbene.
Ausma and her mother and brother disembarked at the same station from which they left eight years before, not far from the cemetery where my great-grandmother wrote of her longing to be buried	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She would get her wish, dying three years after the family's return from Siberia	ZERO	Ausma's mother died 3 years after their return.
But she never did return to her original place of residence	DEL	
By then, <i>Lembi</i> had been absorbed into one of the local collective farms, sections of the house converted to stalls, people living in the barns	CON	The family were not able to return to their farm, because it had been taken over by the state.
Sometimes, it seems any answer you choose can explain everything and nothing	DEL	
EVIDENCE: <i>_Choose one:</i> And someone writes <i>bees</i>	DEL	
And someone else writes <i>hens</i>	DEL	
And someone else writes <i>kulak</i>	DEL	
But there is another possibility, one that I suspect my grandmother must have known	CON	Inara suspects that maybe the family was exiled because Livija had fled.
In addition to owning farmland, the exiled often had connections to someone who fled the country and did not come back	CON	
Or, worse still, to someone who'd fought for the German side	CON	
If you had asked my grandmother, Who is responsible for the loss of the farm called <i>Lembi</i> and the subsequent exile of everyone who lived upon it, would she have written <i>Me</i> ?	DEL	

## CHAPTER 19

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She tried to send them a message to let them know that she had survived, but it never reached them	CON	Both Livija and her family unsuccessfully tried to contact the other for more than ten years.
They tried to send her a message to let her know that they had almost not survived, but it never reached her	DEL	
For a long time, they were upset with her, because they thought maybe her silence was a choice, that she did not want to remember them	CON	Both sides feared that the other was unwilling to communicate or dead.
And then they would worry that her silence actually meant she was dead	DEL	
And then she would worry that their silence actually meant they were dead	DEL	
In this way, they spent more than ten years, trapped in silence and paranoia and misunderstanding	DEL	
It wasn't until she had safely reached the States, and they had safely returned from Siberia, that they were able to find each other again, through letters	CON	After both sides had gone through suffering and resettled in life, they managed to contact each other.
<i>Dearest Sister, We are overjoyed to know that you are alive</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
<i>When so much time passed with no word from you, we decided we should give up ever hearing from you again</i>	DEL	
<i>Gradually, our hurt and our anger subsided and we wanted to try once more to find out what had happened to you, but we didn't know where to start</i>	DEL	
<i>We were so grateful to get this letter</i>	DEL	
<i>We realize now that you tried to reach us, too, and that you also had no idea where we were, or what had happened to us</i>	DEL	
As much as these letters offered the family a temporary stay against the realities of exile, they also had a strange way of simultaneously magnifying its effects	DEL	
The family quickly learned to read for what was not there, to be sensitive to that which was avoided	DEL	
The letters taught them to think in terms of how much they could leave unsaid while still appearing to say something	DEL	
They told stories not about what really happened, but stories designed to help you guess what really happened when what really happened was impossible to say—a truthful misdirection, a necessary fiction, cribbed entirely from fact	CON	The family feared to communicate openly and wrote their letters softening the real meanings of words, not revealing the full extent of their reality.
<i>You may not know, but after the war, I spent some time working in a coal mine, and one day, the mine collapsed and my left leg was crushed</i>	DEL	
<i>I developed gangrene and the bone became tubercular and so it was amputated to my hip</i>	DEL	
<i>Ausma is now the strongest one in the family and our sole breadwinner</i>	DEL	
<i>Not long after I recovered from my accident, we went far away to work for a time</i>	DEL	
<i>Just when our mother began to think she would like to pay a visit to her husband's grave, and to the graves of her parents, we were given permission to return here, to Gulbene</i>	DEL	
<i>We have a new place to live now</i>	DEL	
<i>We depend on the kindness of relatives who are letting us stay with them</i>	DEL	
<i>Ausma is working for the local kolkhoz, tending chickens</i>	DEL	
It was as if they were squinting through keyholes at one another, seeing only cropped or partial glimpses of their lives	DEL	
Or maybe they were more like people trying to force the shape of constellations from individual stars	DEL	
They assumed relationships, presumed significance where maybe there was none	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Or was it more like divination, like throwing bones, studying the patterns of the fragments that emerged, as if this could finally answer the real questions that they had for each other, but could never voice: Was I right to flee? Do you ever wish you'd never left? Are things really so terrible where you are? Are they really so wonderful where you are? Are you scared? Are you happy? Which of us is truly the fortunate one—the one who was taken, or the one who was left?	CON	A lot was left unsaid in the letters and many questions cannot be answered.
<i>Hello, Amerika! Dear family, far away! Loving wishes from the Motherland! My most precious child! Here is some news about the cows: we just bought a heifer, and she is a such a soft milker, with pliable teats! Thank you for the coffee, the candy, the peanut butter, the cooking oil, the raisins, the perfumes and the medicine for the children</i>	CON	Soon, the letters became like a report on the daily life at the farm.
<i>We are cutting wood now</i>	DEL	
<i>We are waiting for snow</i>	DEL	
<i>We are putting up a greenhouse</i>	DEL	
<i>There has been no rain, everything is dry</i>	DEL	
<i>There has been too much rain</i>	DEL	
<i>This is a good hay year</i>	DEL	
<i>There are so many tomatoes</i>	DEL	
<i>There are no nuts to gather</i>	DEL	
<i>Today I went mushrooming and found more than twenty! Bilberries, too! The barley is so beautiful this year</i>	DEL	
<i>Thank you for the money; I used it to buy a coat to replace the one I had that was twenty years old</i>	CON	Livija and Emils sent money to the family.
<i>Thank you for the money, we have been doing without refrigeration for the last two years, and our old TV showed only pictures of fog</i>	CON	
<i>Thank you so much for your help with the car</i>	CON	
<i>I found a 1984 Ford Escort, violet in color</i>	DEL	
<i>I used to be scared to even dream of a car that didn't fill with clouds of dust and that in cold weather I could drive without shaking</i>	DEL	
<i>Now that dream has been realized! I am still having a little trouble learning how to drive it</i>	DEL	
<i>A Ford is no Zaporozhets! Pork is selling at a good price</i>	DEL	
<i>We harvested all the potatoes in just three days this year!</i>	DEL	
<i>We have eight milking cows, three horses, two sheep, eight steer, many chickens and ducks</i>	DEL	
<i>I have lost all my teeth</i>	DEL	
<i>The dentist wants twenty lats for new teeth</i>	DEL	
<i>That is the one good thing about Communist times</i>	DEL	
<i>It used to be free</i>	DEL	
<i>We are very worried about the coming cold</i>	DEL	
<i>The cows are already showing thick coats</i>	DEL	
<i>Will they produce dramatically less milk? Thank you for the twenty lats</i>	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
<i>The neighbor who all winter long gave us water from his well when ours was too frozen to use had just asked us if we could loan him thirty-six lats so he could have his own teeth pulled</i>	DEL	
<i>We were so worried, where would we find the money? We gave him your twenty lats! Soon the cows will go to grass, and we hope they will produce at least ten liters more</i>	DEL	
<i>This is what is blooming here: apples, plums, tulips, narcissus</i>	DEL	
<i>We brought the cows that would no longer milk to the slaughterhouse, but they still have not paid what we are owed for three months</i>	DEL	
<i>We've picked two kilos of strawberries already and we can't pick them all</i>	DEL	
<i>We've given the rest to the neighbors who have even less</i>	CON	The family was very selfless and shared a lot with neighbors who had troubles.
<i>I am worried that there is something wrong with the bees</i>	DEL	
<i>You should be careful about sending cash</i>	CON	
<i>There are stories in the news about letters found slit open, whole sacks of them, dumped in Riga's woods, undelivered, all from people in the US sending to their relatives here</i>	CON	Ausma writes that the letters are often opened in the mail, looking for money.
<i>Our Christmas card from you arrived slit open</i>	CON	
<i>It's like the old days with the censors, but they aren't looking for words anymore, they are looking for dollars! Milk prices are so low, because we are competing with the rest of Europe now</i>	DEL	
<i>We can only pray they will go up again</i>	DEL	
<i>Who will care for my bees when I am gone? No one seems interested in learning</i>	DEL	
<i>Will I be the last beekeeper in our family? The snows this year reach to my belly</i>	DEL	
<i>Remember the stand of maples that used to grow next to Lembi? They're gone</i>	DEL	
<i>A wicked storm knocked them down</i>	DEL	
<i>The bees are dying, and we don't know why</i>	DEL	
Livija could never decide if their words to her were like dying bees, or downed maples, or soft milkers, or new-old Fords the color of violets	CON	Livija wanted to learn more about her relatives than the results of the farm.
She wanted so much <i>to feel along with them</i> , but there was only so much that she could intuit from these accidental-on-purpose tone poems that they composed for one another, first through the worst of the Cold War, then through the Singing Revolution, then finally through the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the country's early days of independence	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Dream moved faster than paper	CON	Communication through post was slow and sometimes the letter never reached their destination.
Again and again, correspondence was lost, whether through theft, knifed-open cards left to rot in the forests outside Riga, or through silly error, additional stutters to their already elliptical communication	CON	
<i>You still have not said whether you received our last letter? Maybe it never came? Could you put a date on the letters you write to me, that way I can track how long it takes for your letters to reach me, and I will know when to worry if I have not heard from you for some time</i>	DEL	
Written confirmation of her mother's death reached my grandmother long after her mother's spirit had visited her in hersleep	DEL	
The dream of the farm returning to the family had also arrived long before the envelope that my grandmother finally opened at the kitchen table where she and my grandfather had just a few years before taken turns tapping out their demands for the end to Latvia's occupation on my grandfather's typewriter	DEL	
<i>You should know that Lembi is in ruins, her brother wrote, but there might be a chance to get it back</i>	DEL	
The new government, post-independence, was willing to restore any parcel of private land confiscated under Soviet rule, so long as the former owners could document their clear claim to it	CON	After Latvia's independence, owners were able to redeem their property that had been collectivized.
And even before she read her brother's next words, she knew what he was about to say	DEL	
Had she not spent years imagining it into existence?	DEL	
Let us imagine it, too: that one day, not long after the family had been exiled to Siberia, an old school friend of my grandmother happened to be wandering the local market in Gulbene	DEL	
As she drifted between the vendors, she spotted an old wardrobe for sale, the wood the color of spun honey	DEL	
Perhaps she ran her hands down each side, testing the ease of the grain	DEL	
Or she tapped the back, to see if the maker chose flimsy boards for the places no one else would see	DEL	
She tried the doors, checked the resistance of the pulls, listened for the wheeze of the hinges as they opened	DEL	
It was then that she saw something on the top shelf, something pushed to a far corner, nearly out of sight	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Balanced on the tips of her milking boots, she could only just bat the edge of it with her fingertips, like a cat at work on a skein of yarn	DEL	
When it dropped in her hands she could see it was a tin, secured with a single battered clasp	DEL	
Inside, depending on who is telling the story, or who is imagining the story, maybe there was a stack of photographs, face sidedown	CON	A friend of Livija's bought a wardrobe from <i>Lembi</i> .
And so the woman turned the stack over, as if preparing for a game of cards	DEL	
The first image revealed was of a face	DEL	
Old and anonymous—a stout, rippled-skinned auntie, face like a hazelnut peeled from its shell	DEL	
Or, maybe, a whiskery, horse-nosed uncle	DEL	
The next image was also of a face, but this one she recognized: her old school friend, lost to the war	DEL	
It seemed such an odd, impossible coincidence and so, she began to flip through the entire stack to make sure she was not imagining things	DEL	
But there she was again, her friend, now in communion dress	DEL	
There were her siblings, her mother and father	DEL	
There was a picture of their high school class, standing outside the baron's castle—and there, in the back, the man who would become her husband	DEL	
There was a picture of the rook-haired baby girl they would have together, the child rooting about with a stick in what looked like the cabbage fields of <i>Lembi</i>	DEL	
And there was a picture of the boy her friend once loved, before his foot found the nail	DEL	
But more important than the photographs: a tin, containing a sheet of parchment yellowing at the edges	CON	She found original ownership documents in it.
It appeared to be some sort of document	DEL	
Among the villagers it was an open secret who had been sent away on the trains to the east, those whose farms had been seized and were never expected to come back	DEL	
She knew then that this had to be the family's wardrobe, likely carried out of <i>Lembi</i> on someone's back while they were being loaded into the train cars at the village station	DEL	
She snapped the lid of the tin shut	DEL	
How much for this wardrobe? she said	DEL	
And then she paid the seller exactly what he asked, because she wanted to get away as fast as she could from the circumstances that led to its sale in the village market	DEL	
She kept the wardrobe in a corner of her house, and the tin upon its shelf	CON	The woman saved her findings to give to the family if they ever returned.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
The dust it gathered represented so many contingencies: <i>if</i> the family survived, <i>if</i> they ever came back to Gulbene, <i>if</i> she was still alive when they returned	DEL	
The dust tasted like the passing years, bits of hair, particles of skin, molecules of worry, specks of joy	DEL	
Old barley fields gave way to new soaring apartment blocks	DEL	
The villagers ironed their children's Young Pioneer uniforms and learned what was best said outside their children's earshot, so that the children, later, did not, in all innocence, accidentally denounce their parents to the teacher or the neighbors	DEL	
They parked tractors and combines in what was once the former ballroom of the baron who sold <i>Lembi</i> all those years ago to his servant and shoemaker	DEL	
They learned to anticipate which days the stores might put out some of the special rationed commodities—everyone could still remember the taste of the little sausages, in particular, stuffed so tightly in their casings like the weary calves of the wool-socked women who tied on their head scarves, as if preparing for battle, and committed themselves to days in line, for the momentary distraction of those little sausages, or the occasional tongue-burst of soft- whipped ice cream, the toothy spray of an orange slice in winter	DEL	
With all these new ways of living still to learn, the woman forgot about the tin in her closet	DEL	
And then, the family gave her cause to remember, stepping back as they did onto the platform of the very same train station from which they had been taken eight years earlier	CON	When the family returned, she gave them the documents that could allow them to redeem <i>Lembi</i> .
She returned the wardrobe with its tin	CON	
And with riven hands, they unclasped its crypted artifacts, let the parchment uncurl and speak	DEL	
It was the original deed to <i>Lembi</i> , the only record of the shoemaker's marks, the baron's loan and the recorder's sketch of the shape of the land that once was theirs, the ghostly outlines of all the swells and forests that fell within its boundaries	DEL	
As a document, it no longer held any real power, they knew, the line of "X"s made all those years ago by the shoemaker's hands now covered over by new marks: the cloven hooves and mucketed treads of the collective's cows and all the workers who cared for them, who lived in the house, too, among their herd, trailing after them, scratching at flea bites, dreading already the call for morning milking that pulled them from their beds on the floors of what was once the old kitchen, the sitting room, the old shed where milk was once left to cool	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
In those strange days, when people rarely ever said exactly what they meant, at least in public, they all began to learn that lying could be a kind of truth	DEL	
And when truth can be lies, and lies can be truth, then certainty is destabilized, but so is uncertainty	DEL	
<i>Don't believe them even when they are lying</i> , went one saying	DEL	
In other words, everything requires translation	DEL	
Truth, lies, lie-truths, but also, truth-lies	DEL	
To successfully anticipate the correct sequence of truth-lie-lie-truth-lie required a kind of detachment that sometimes made them doubt their own minds	DEL	
It was simply assumed, when the family returned, that everyone would go on acting as if nothing had happened, as if things had always been this way, cows in the kitchen, ten workers to a room, your furniture in someone else's house, your laundry on another woman's line, your horse dragging someone else's plow, your hives in someone else's meadow	DEL	
Sometimes, you just needed to hold a piece of paper in your hand that said, Yes, you could trust your own mind	DEL	
<i>Lembi</i> was real for you	DEL	
Its borders were real	DEL	
What had happened inside those borders, that was an altogether different matter, open to interpretation and even misunderstanding	DEL	
But the parchment could reassure them of this much, at least: they were not wrong to claim that their memories, good and bad, remembered and forgotten, shared and disputed, could be traced back to a specific place in the physical world	CON	The family safekept the document as a relic, not imagining that they could ever reclaim <i>Lembi</i> .
And so they kept it, this small quiet verification of a private fact, which they assumed would only ever matter to them	DEL	
To harbor it felt like a form of silent resistance, an assertion even, if only to themselves, that they still had secrets, something that belonged only to them; one small aspect of their life to which no one else had access, something they could keep separate, set apart, concealed in a battered tin—hidden evidence of what they had once possessed and lost, which meant that it possessed them still	DEL	
Maybe, they decided, this was the safest form of possession in the end, harbored as they were inside a sustained and uninterrupted longing for something that was already gone	DEL	
At least this way, what they had could never be taken away from them again	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
So in the months after independence was declared, when there began to be talk of returning seized property, and they looked again upon the parchment locked in the tin in this new light, it is hard not to suspect that any initial excitement they would have felt at the possibility of <i>Lembi</i> 's return might also have been accompanied by a small pulse of fear, an instinctive twitch to run and spare oneself the pain of a reunion that brought with it the possibility of new loss	CON	The possibility of reclaiming <i>Lembi</i> excited and scared the family.
There was a certain safety to staying exactly where they were, fixed in memory, reassured of the legitimacy of their claims, certain of the wrong that had been visited upon them, never challenged by the disappointments of reality	DEL	
My grandmother wrote: <i>We marvel that of my childhood home something still stands</i>	CON	Livija wished dearly that the farm could be brought back to life.
<i>And although it pains me to hear that it is so overgrown, that you can't even see the old apple orchard anymore and that all the maples next to the house are gone, the farm can be rebuilt, and we will help you rebuild, if this is what you want</i>	DEL	
<i>I will help you do this from afar for as long as Emils and I are able, as long as we are still breathing</i>	DEL	
<i>We will give you all the support you need</i>	DEL	
<i>I have such fond memories of my childhood on the farm, I would love for Lembi to return to our family, for others to experience it as I did</i>	DEL	
<i>Wouldn't it be wonderful, brother, if you could spend your last days there, in the home where you were born, and I was born, and Ausma was born?</i>	DEL	
In the end, it was Ligita and Aivars who offered to try to return the farm to its former state	CON	Ausma's daughter Ligita and her husband took on to rebuild <i>Lembi</i> .
If administrative order was what had ultimately banished the family, it now offered their means of return	DEL	
There was no human drama, no open conflict	DEL	
Only a series of mundane bureaucratic steps	DEL	
Copy, assemble, swear, sign	DEL	
Once the original deed had been presented, there was nothing to argue	CON	The original ownership documents easily allowed the family to regain ownership.
The cows left the house, the people left the barn	DEL	
Ligita and Aivars swept the rooms of manure and trash, bleached the walls of their methane stains, scrubbed through layers of unwashed funk and exhaustion and fitful night breath	CON	Ligita and Aivars repaired the house and the land.
They painted and papered and polished, and the fleas crabbed and pinched in tonguing waves, until their skin began to leap on its own, already anticipating the bristling touch of their legs	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
With the land itself, they were forced to start over again, to level the burls of brambles and strangling grasses, to replot and reseed	DEL	
They resurrected the old apple orchard but could not reclaim the original stands of gooseberries and currants	DEL	
Evidence of the vines of hops that once supplied Ligita's grandfather with the ingredients for his homebrew had long since vanished	DEL	
Here and there, the serrated leaves of the descendants of the old hemp crops tipped and waved above the weeds	DEL	
They filled the barn with milk cows, sheep and hogs	CON	Animals returned to the farm.
When the Roma came riding through, selling horses, Aivars picked out a gelding, feeling his legs for soundness, quietly assessing his disposition	DEL	
They found dogs that knew in their blood how to cut a herd, how to bite without teeth	DEL	
And they returned bees to hives in the meadows, so that when it was time, Janis could collect their combs, then crutch to the kitchen, where they had placed a honey extractor for him to use	CON	Bees were again in the farm and Janis was the beekeeper.
First, he would place the combs inside a basket, then he would lower the basket into the extractor's drum, which he would spin as quickly as his hands could turn the crank, trying to create enough force to fling the honey from its cells	DEL	
Then he would drain the nectar that had collected in the drum's bottom into old jars	DEL	
For days after, as they walked through each scoured room, they could still smell the traces of crushed grass, new clover, fermented blackberry, the waxen peel of pollen as it is released, the sticky heat of bee's wings	DEL	
It was as if they had stitched traces of the old farm into the existing world	DEL	
And it worked for a time, this reclaiming of what had been as a way to live yourself into what could be	CON	For some time, the farm was resurrected.
But gradually, the patching between past and present began to show, then strain	DEL	
Aivars, who had always been active in the country's national guard, began to climb within its ranks	DEL	
And while this development brought more opportunity and more pay, it also meant more travel, which frequently kept him away from home for days	DEL	
All too often, that left Ligita to tend to the farm and the children on her own	CON	More and more often, Ligita was alone trying to keep up the farm.

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
<i>I'm worried about Ligita's health, Ausma wrote her sister, and she did not say this in her letter, but watching her daughter, she must have been reminded of her younger self, the fear and the stress she felt when the task of running Lembi fell to her alone</i>	DEL	
<i>My sweet Ligita's not sleeping</i>	DEL	
<i>There's so much work to be done and she can't keep up, even as she's giving it all her strength</i>	DEL	
<i>I'm worried she will exhaust herself to the point where she won't be able to go on</i>	DEL	
Here was the truth: the farm was an old dream from which the new country had awakened	DEL	
Without the money for machinery, for rapid expansion, without the ability to farm several hundred acres at once, a person would never be able to scratch out anything more than the most basic existence as a farmer in Latvia's new-old countryside	CON	It appeared that the family could not sustain the farm in the modern world.
Sometimes, the ending, the resolution that strikes you as so right, so happy, so perfect as to have been scripted—lost farm returned to the family from which it was taken, continuity restored, guilt assuaged, collective memories repaired—turns out to be the one you didn't really want, or need	DEL	
Was it not better to sell what they could, while they still could, to set aside whatever money they might make to help their children to go to college, to learn to use something other than their hands, to move forward without debt? Could they not hold jobs in the village, but still make time, in their off-hours, for the old ways, the smell of honey, the swing of the scythe? Then why did they still feel so guilty to think of <i>Lembi</i> , abandoned, decaying, returning to ground? As far as Ausma is concerned, there was only ever one choice, and that was to let go of <i>Lembi</i> , to release it, once and for all	CON	Ausma considered that it was best to leave <i>Lembi</i> for good and hold it only in their memories.
Earth is earth, she tells me	DEL	
It does not matter whether you live upon it for it to remember you, and for you to remember it	DEL	
After living through the family's first desperate attempts to hold on to the farm, never realizing just how much that would cost them—because what if she had not tried, at sixteen, to hold everything together following her father's death, what if she had said, Enough, I am too young, and they had lost <i>Lembi</i> then, would it really have been so bad, because how could they have sent them to Siberia when they had no more hectares to their name?—Ausma was clear: there was nothing sacred or noble about choosing home-ground above all else	CON	Her life experience had taught Ausma – you must first take care of yourself.
Still, she says, whenever she dreams of a house, her mind always returns her to <i>Lembi</i>	CON	<i>Lembi</i> has remained in Ausma's heart as her one and only home.
It is the only home I ever visit in my dreams, she says	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
Even if it's not supposed to be <i>Lembi</i> , it always looks exactly like <i>Lembi</i>	DEL	
Once, I asked Ausma if she knew how <i>Lembi</i> got its name, and what its significance might be, but she said she didn't know	CON	Inara wonders what is the meaning of the farm's name.
I was too young to care about such things, she said, and I never thought to ask the people who would know while I still could	DEL	
Over the last few years, I have tried, without much luck, to come up with a satisfactory answer	DEL	
Something to do with lambs, someone suggested	DEL	
The baron was infatuated with Italian things, and it was a reference to something Italian that was modified over the years, someone else said	DEL	
But then recently, as I was thinking about all this, about Lembi, about the difference between what we lose and what we let go, I stumbled upon a paper tracing the <i>anthroponymic evolution of Latvian names</i>	DEL	
Among the examples listed is the name <i>Lembe</i> , which is referenced in <i>The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia</i> , and thought perhaps to trace its lineage back to ancient Finno-Ugric roots	CON	Unexpectedly, Inara finds that the word may be Finno-Ugric and mean – love.
It means love	CON	

## CHAPTER 20

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
They are too old to hay, but every morning I wake to find Ausma and Harijs at the kitchen window, scanning the road for combines, consulting the clouds, debating with each other as if they were in charge of all the surrounding fields	DEL	
The neighbor, why is he waiting so long to gather the windrows? Ausma says	DEL	
Can't he see it's going to rain? He should be out there!	DEL	
And then Aivars and Ligita call	DEL	
Their hay is ready, and they have enough to spare	DEL	
Could Ausma and Harijs use some? Ausma bites back tears	DEL	
They have spent the last of their pension checks for the month, and there is still a week left before the next ones come, and they have been worrying how they will feed the horse, but they didn't want to ask for help	DEL	
Oh yes, she says, and hangs up, only to realize there is a new problem	DEL	
How to get the hay—and store it in the barn before the rain they are predicting arrives? Usually, another relative with a truck spares Harijs the bother of hay collection, but he is unavailable	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
We are old but not helpless, Ausma says at last, as they debate what to do	CON	Inara and Harijs ride in the old horse-drawn wagon to get some hay from Ligita.
Take the old wagon! Inara can help	CON	
In Communist times, Harijs had worked training all the collective's horses	DEL	
At one point, he and Ausma had cared for more than two hundred	DEL	
It is immediately clear, by the speed with which he tacks the horse and hitches it to the wagon, that he has missed this part of his history, and is eager to exercise his skills as a horseman one more time	DEL	
I watch as he leans in and whispers something in the horse's ear	DEL	
What did you tell him? I ask	DEL	
Harijs doesn't respond	DEL	
And I can't be sure if it is because he does not hear me or because he is choosing not to answer, whether these are the kind of words that are more than words	DEL	
Holding the reins in one hand, Harijs sits on the wagon's edge, one leg dangling off the side, just above the ground	DEL	
I sit behind him in the empty bed of the wagon on an old rag rug Ausma has laid for me to sit on—to <i>make your chariot ride a little softer</i> —and I keep my hands around the pitchforks to stop their rattling	DEL	
We ride in silence, Harijs concentrating on the horse's path, alert for the sound of cars	DEL	
Occasionally, he will click or whistle, and the horse will adjust to his commands, but mostly it seems that Harijs communicates only with the slightest change in the tension in his body, a twitch, a small tug, nothing I can see	CON	Harijs masterfully guides the horse.
Just past the crossroads pine, he maneuvers the horse toward the center of the road so that we can make room for two young women walking along the shoulder	CON	Two young women hitch a ride on the wagon, feeling as if they were in an old book or painting.
As they register the clatter of hooves, not the hum of tires, they stop and gape	DEL	
I've only ever seen this in books, one says	DEL	
Are you real? asks the other	DEL	
It's like a painting, says the first woman	DEL	
Would you like a ride? says Harijs	DEL	
Yes, they shout	DEL	
Harijs blushes	DEL	
The horse takes this moment to let out a stream of urine	DEL	
I can't wait to tell everyone that I have hitchhiked on a wagon, says the first woman	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
When I tell Ausma the story later, about Harijs picking up young women with his wagon, she laughs	DEL	
They must have been really young to be so impressed! In Communist times, well into the sixties, most people here couldn't afford cars	DEL	
We still did everything with horses	DEL	
Or we rode bicycles	DEL	
I remember when Harijs finally saved up enough to have a motorcycle	DEL	
With a sidecar! That's where I would ride	DEL	
Now that was fun	DEL	
At Ligita and Aivars's house, we ease the wagon out to the back field, where they have forked the windrows into dense, towering piles	DEL	
Aren't those beautiful, says Harijs	DEL	
It's almost a shame to take something so beautiful apart	DEL	
But this is what they do, peeling sheets of hay from the mound with the tines of the pitchforks, carefully spreading layer upon layer on the wagon's bed	CON	They pick up the hay and travel home in the same-old way.
Every so often, Ligita will hoist herself onto the growing pile and walk from one end of the wagon to the other, balancing the load, packing it down	DEL	
Soon the stack of hay towers more than fifteen feet above the ground	DEL	
And this is how we ride back, perched on the very top, nothing to hold the hay in place, no rope, no straps, only the simple eloquent construction of each careful layer	DEL	
You're awake, Ausma says, as I pad into the kitchen, and tap the side of the kettle with my palm to gauge whether it's warm enough for tea	DEL	
You are here, I tell myself, you are here	DEL	
You are here with Ausma, in her kitchen, with the radio playing Latvian pop songs, and there are chamomile flowers and nettle leaves drying on the stove, and there is the newspaper with its jokes, and there, through the window, is where Ausma and Harijs were married, and a little farther still, there is Ausma's birch tree	CON	Inara has to remind herself that after that the sisters went through, she is there in Latvia with Ausma.
This morning we've already had quite the excitement, Ausma says	DEL	
Her voice is clipped, cantering	DEL	
Our horse is loose! Harijs went to the barn to feed him and he was gone	ZERO	Ausma and Harijs' horse is loose.
Now Harijs is off in his car, trying to find him, and Ligita and Aivars are looking, too	CON	Most of the family is deployed to look for it.
I picture Harijs swerving down the road we just traveled with the wagon, the car stuck in second gear, his window down, neck craned for some sign of the gelding	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
I tell Ausma I can run the length of what was once the old war road to check whether the horse has found its way into any of the fields that border its route	DEL	
She agrees, and before I can even suggest it, she offers to tie up the dog	DEL	
The road is sun-buckled, beaten bare by the heat, and it's a long time before I can feel myself falling into an easy rhythm	DEL	
I try to focus on the drone of the barley fields, still not quite ready for harvest, but everything pointing toward fall, the cattail heads cottoning, the scouting trill of the little dog that will rush to the edge of his farm to prance and shake his beard at me, but never chase me	CON	Inara runs down the old war road looking for the horse and observes the landscape.
And now the unfalling walls of the old stone barn left to decide for itself when it is ready to give up	DEL	
I know the horse likes oak trees, prefers the scratch of their bark on his flank, and I let myself imagine briefly that I might see him in the grove coming up on my right, currycombing himself against the biggest trunks	DEL	
But once I am close enough to get a better look, I can see no sign of him	DEL	
The land here dips and flattens so that I can peer far into the distance	DEL	
There's nothing moving, just a faint pluming of dust	CON	The horse is nowhere to be seen.
Most likely from a cow, spooked by the wind, hooves tearing at the dry hide of the fields	DEL	
I realize that I am now close to the small cottage where my grandmother's brother finally settled after his release from Siberia, and where he would have reconciled himself to the news that he could not return to <i>Lembi</i> to live out the last of his days when it was finally sold for good	CON	On her way, she nears the house where Ausma's brother Janis lived after <i>Lembi</i> was sold.
And where I imagine, in just a few weeks, as summer gives way fully to fall, and it's time for the dead to return home again, he might just come walking, the hem of his good leg burred with the meadow's seeds, one hand on his crutch, the other at his face, swiping at the last of the mosquitoes that rise from the water that collects in a depression that rings the property like a moat, and from which the house takes its name, Gravisi, the Latvian word for <i>ditch</i>	DEL	
The only difference between the word <i>ditch</i> and a word for <i>grave</i> in Latvian, as in a carving out, an excavation, a deep impression, is the pronunciation of a single small, but critical, accent, on a single vowel	DEL	
It was here, at the cottage upon the ditch, that my grandmother's brother took his last breaths	GEN	Janis had died in the house.
I had been inside my great-uncle's house only once	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
My cousin the mail carrier, she of the exaltation of cows, thought that there might still be letters or other family papers somewhere inside the house, which has been left largely as it was the day they wrapped his body in a blanket and pulled the door to his old home softly closed	CON	Inara had been inside the house once, after Janis's death.
She offered to find me the keys	DEL	
Inside, the house smelled of night soil, the steady tunneling of earthworms, years of trapped sunlight, the sharp spiking perfume of kerosene	DEL	
It was decorated with only a few items of furniture: a table, and in one corner a bed, and next to that, a small nightstand with a singledrawer	DEL	
As I slid it open, I was startled to find inside a soft drift of newsprint, like a nest a mouse might make	DEL	
But as I began to pull the strands apart, I realized it was a series of clippings, poems, in fact, dozens of fragile lines snipped from what looked like the obituary section of the localnewspaper	DEL	
The time of hardship has ended—There are no tomorrows, only the voice of the wind	DEL	
And a heart that will never again know pain, or cold	DEL	
Opposite the bed, an old wardrobe that covered most of the wall	DEL	
The doors rattled at my touch, and the empty hangers inside swung and chattered	DEL	Inara looked through a wardrobe in the house.
There was no poetry here, only dark corners, emptied, a single plaid button-down shirt that held the form of him	DEL	
I could see that the bureau's backing seemed to be coming loose, an edge of wood protruding, perhaps popped free from its nail	DEL	
But when I reached inside to knock it back, I found instead something like a frame	CON	Inara found a portrait of Livija in the wardrobe.
Artwork, I realized, that had been placed backwards, picture side facing the wall	CON	
I drew it out, so that I might get a better look	DEL	
But the glass encasing the portrait was coated with such a thick layer of grime that the image was hard to read	DEL	
I considered for a moment using the shirt to wipe it clean, but somehow that felt wrong, and so I rubbed the glass with my palm, until I had removed enough of the film from the glass to suggest that what was buried here might be a woman, a portrait composed of quick pencil strokes	DEL	
Gradually, the portrait's features began to come into focus	CON	
A face pushing through the dust	CON	
My grandmother	CON	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
She was young again, maybe sixteen, her hair in thick plaits, the same age she would have been when my grandfather carved her name, Livija, in the birch tree	CON	The portrait is of Livija in her youth.
I stood there with her for what felt like a very long time	DEL	
Then, before I changed my mind, I placed the portrait back inside the bureau, and closed the door as softly as I could on the little house at the edge of the ditch, which could so easily be mistaken for a grave, and stepped outside into the sound of all the fields singing, the things alive in it waking up to the night	CON	During her visit then, Inara decided to leave the portrait in the house.
I never see the horse	DEL	
But by the time I finally make my way back to Ausma's, Harijs has at least returned with a promising lead	DEL	
A man who lives a few kilometers away spotted a gelding trying to lip green apples from his trees	CON	A neighbor thinks the horse might be on his property.
When he approached, it cantered off	DEL	
He thought he could still see the horse off in the tree line, waiting for a chance to resume its harvest	DEL	
The man has offered to throw a rope over the horse if it returns, and promises to hold him until Harijs can come back to fetch him	DEL	
But first, lunch, says Ausma, come, sit	DEL	
She puts a plate in front of me	DEL	
Do you know how many times I should have died? Harijs asks	DEL	
I tell Ausma about my route, about passing the house at the edge of the ditch	DEL	
All these empty houses of ours, Ausma says, such a shame	DEL	
Livija's there, I say	CON	
What do you mean, she's there, Ausma says	DEL	
And I tell her about the portrait that I deliberately left in the wardrobe	DEL	Inara tells Ausma about the portrait.
That I like to think it's still there, safe, in the dark	DEL	
Is that where you found it? Ausma asks	DEL	
In the wardrobe? I nod	DEL	
You know, that was the wardrobe from <i>Lembi</i> , she says	CON	Ausma reveals it was the wardrobe from <i>Lembi</i> where the documents were found.
The one the woman found	CON	
The one that had the deed inside that got us back the farm	DEL	
Funny you found her there, of all places	DEL	
Harijs must sense the tears I am struggling to hold back	DEL	
Do you have the same cows in America? he asks	DEL	
Oh, now, says Ausma, setting down her knife and shuffling over to press me to her chest	DEL	
Dear one, don't cry	DEL	

<b>Microproposition</b>	<b>Macrorule</b>	<b>Macroproposition</b>
We can get that portrait for you, if it means that much	CON	Inara begins to cry realizing that she has let her grandmother go.
And I want to tell her that I'm not crying because I need something of my grandmother back	DEL	
I'm crying because suddenly I don't	DEL	
But I can't find the words	DEL	
And so I decide, for once, to leave it this way, exactly as it should be—a missing space, where she will always be	CON	Inara will not look for the portrait for it is enough that it exists.

## Appendix 2: Chapter Macrostructures

1

M1 - Inara visits Latvia for the first time.

2

M2 – Latvians believe that the dead can return.

M3 – It is believed that once a year, the dead return to observe the living.

M4 – The living recognise the arrival of the dead and communicate with them.

M5 – The dead are always linked to the place where they had lived.

M6 – Latvians believe in life after death.

M7 – Inara's grandmother believed she was once visited by the ghost of her mother.

M8 – The Latvians found the soil one is buried in to be very important, it had to be Latvian soil.

M9 – Livija and Emils had bought land plots for their own graves.

M10 – Due to WWII Inara's grandmother, Livija, fled Riga alone with two children, while her husband was fighting in the war.

M11 – Inara grew up with her grandparents and was very close with Livija.

M12 – Livija told many stories of her life in Latvia, recreating the farm *Lembi* in her own and Inara's mind, with a great focus on the daily jobs on the farm.

M13 – Inara's grandparents ended up in the USA.

M14 – In Livija's and Ausma's childhood, children started working in the farm as soon as they started walking.

M15 – Both Inara's father and his father, Inara's grandfather, Emils, fought in wars and developed mental health issues.

M16 – Livija and Emils were part of the local Latvian immigrant community.

M17 – Inara felt obliged to gather and preserve stories about Latvia and *Lembi*.

M18 – Livija and Emils visited free Latvia once, but returned to their life in the USA.

3

M19 – In the old days, people used to sit around the newly dead person's body and talk to it.

M20 – During the body's first night after death, the living left food for it in case they wanted to have one last meal.

M21 – In the old days, the dead remained members of the family.

M22 – Inara missed Livija greatly after her death.

M23 – Immigrant families sometimes faced ridicule.

M24 - Inara found it hard to travel to *Lembi* in her mind in Livija's absence.

M25 – Inara's father's traumatic past made him closed-off.

M26 – Inara began her career in gathering and preserving stories about abandonment and loneliness.

M27 – Inara finds a scarf Livija had carried with her from Riga to the USA which serves as proof that Livija's stories were once a reality.

4

M28 – Inara meets her extended family for the first time, headed by Ausma, Livija's younger sister, and her husband Harijs, and instantly feels at home.

M29 – Inara constantly compares Ausma to Livija.

M30 – Ausma with her parents and siblings had been exiled to Siberia.

M31 – Inara is unsure how to learn about the past without causing pain to her relatives.

M32 – Inara visits *Lembi* for the first time and finds it abandoned and in ruin.

M33 – Inara learned about Latvian traditions, folklore, and farm-living in Latvian summer camp.

5

M34 – Inara feels emotionally close to her Latvian relatives and at home in Latvia.

M35 – For the Latvians, Inara is a representative of the family they lost during the war.

M36 – People in Gulbene used to inscribe names and symbols in a pine tree near the cemetery as a tribute to the dead.

M37 – Even when no one inscribes on the tree anymore, everyone still honours the tree.

M38 – Many people from Gulbene were exiled during the war, others hid in the forests.

M39 – People did not and do not talk about the terrors of the war and the repressions.

M40 – In the 20th century, more than a million of Latvians were forced to flee, were forcefully exiled or murdered.

M41 – The countryside of Latvia has been almost completely abandoned due to people emigrating in search of better life.

M42 – Inara spent one summer experiencing life in the Latvian countryside, working in the garden and foraging in the forest.

M43 – In the countryside, the flow of time is marked according to nature.

M44 – Ausma and Harijs have a loving relationship.

M45 – Ausma spent much of her youth in Siberia.

M46 – Life in the countryside is structured and follows a routine.

M47 – Inara thinks that the most important parts of life are the everyday little happenings.

M48 – It is incredibly emotionally difficult for Ausma to talk about the terrors of the past, but important for Inara to find out.

6

M49 – In Gulbene, many people along with Ausma’s family were put in cattle cars that would exile them to Siberia.

M50 – After her family was put in the cattle car, Ausma was left alone.

7

M51 – Ausma admired Livija.

M52 – Livija cared for Ausma as if she was her child.

M53 – The sisters met for the last time when Ausma was 14 and Livija was 28.

M54 – During the war and after its end, the sisters were clueless about each other’s fate and re-established contact only decades later.

M55 – Even though Ausma’s mother had tried to protect from being taken to Siberia, she volunteered to go into exile with her family.

M56 – People did not expect people to return from exile.

M57 – Because of some traumatic event when she was 16, Ausma felt like her life had ended.

8

M58 – When a farmhouse is abandoned, it is never demolished, it is left as it is.

M59 – Ausma and Inara visit *Lembi*, which is abandoned and in ruin, the property is overgrown.

M60 – Many properties were abandoned during the war.

M61 – It is very emotional for Ausma to return to *Lembi*.

M62 – Inara’s family has owned the property since 1882 when her great-great-grandfather Andrejs Smits bought it from the local baron.

M63 – For a long time Latvians were peasants and serfs, believed to only know how to work on a farm, but the barons relied on their pagan knowledge of the natural world.

M64 – Despite their lack of freedom and harsh life, Latvians learned to be content with their lives.

M65 – Ausma’s and Livija’s father died in *Lembi* in an accident which changed Ausma’s life forever.

M66 – The father’s death was the beginning of the end of the farm.

9

M67 – Remembering her father’s death is emotionally difficult for Ausma.

M68 – Harijs offers his support to Ausma.

M69 – Andrejs Pumpurs poem Lacplesis (The Bear Slayer) is part of Latvian national identity.

M70 – Lacplesis is the hero, but in the final fight with the Black Knight, they both fall off a cliff.

M71 – The finale of the poem is an eternal struggle that reminds Inara of the strain she is putting on Ausma to go back into her painful memories.

10

M72 – Latvians have strong wedding traditions, but Inara’s grandparents married in the city.

M73 – Inara’s grandparents had a quiet, but loving relationship.

M74 – Due to his past traumas, Inara’s grandfather Emils was quiet and introverted.

M75 – Emils fell in love with Livija while she was dating his best friend, but they reconnected after the boy died and they both independently moved to Riga.

M76 – To express his silent love for her, Emils carved Livija’s name in a tree behind his school.

M77 – In 1905, the former serfs began protests in Riga and attacked manors in the countryside, but thousands were killed as the barons retaliated.

M78 – After declaring the independence of Latvia in 1918, castles and manors were turned into schools.

M79 – Inara’s grandparents were the first generation to grow up calling themselves Latvians.

M80 – Emils and Livija married and welcomed their first child at the onset of WWII.

M81 – Inara looked for the tree with Livija’s name in Cesvaine, but could not find it.

11

M82 – Latvian landscape is level, with low hills.

M83 – The sudden onset of WWII forbade Ausma of ever having the future she had imagined.

M84 – Ausma felt a very close connection to her sister Livija and felt safe when she was with her.

M85 – The people of *Lembi* were beekeepers.

M86 – Latvia lost its independence and became part of the Soviet Republic with the Soviet regime infiltrating every sphere of life.

M87 – The regime imprisoned, tortured, murdered people.

M88 – To get rid of increasingly larger masses, a form of punishment, exile to Siberia was created, plucking families from their homes and separating them forever.

M89 – Those who were left behind, could only quietly observe the changes.

M90 – Young Ausma found that living in a mindless routine was the only way to survive in the face of the uncertainty and fear about the future.

12

M91 – Emils lost one eye in war and wore a glass eye.

M92 – The battle where Emils was wounded was crucial in allowing more people to flee Riga.

M93 – The last thing Emils saw with both his own eyes was war.

M94 – Emils was recruited and fought for the Nazi army, officially having sworn obedience to Hitler.

M95 – Emils had severe emotional traumas from the war and never spoke of it.

M96 – During the brief German occupation of Latvia, genocide against the Jewish was carried out with the active participation of some locals.

M97 – Throughout the early years of war, Livija and Emils attempted to have a normal life, married and had two children.

M98 – Emils miraculously survived being shot in the eye.

13

M99 – From Inara's research, Ausma learns about her sister's journey during the war.

M100 – Inara, like her grandmother did, feels that Latvia's sky is more special than elsewhere.

M101 – Ausma had thought that Livija's life had been easier than hers, without much suffering.

M102 – Livija's friend Liene, barren, was like a second mother to Livija's children who were very young during their flight.

M103 – Livija and Liene fled Riga to escape the danger and violence and ended up in a refugee camp in Hamburg, Germany.

M104 – Latvian folk stories are full of nature bearing the role of surrogate because children lost their parents so often due to crises.

M105 – Liene emigrated to England, but remained in contact with Livija.

M106 – On her deathbed, Liene called for Inara’s father to come to her because she felt he was his son, as well.

14

M107 – Latvians believe in observing nature and the stars to determine the future.

M108 – Emigration from Latvia is widescale.

M109 – When Inara gets a cold her cousins offer her natural remedies – inhaling steam and drinking balsam.

M110 – Latvians believe in people having psychic powers.

M111 – When Ausma and the family arrive in Siberia, a woman who also has suffered and sympathises with Ausma picks the family to stay with her and work for her collective.

M112 – The weather in Siberia is extremely harsh and the landscape is empty and unproviding.

M113 – After the war, Ausma had been running the farm alone and taking care of her mother and brother.

M114 – At first, Ausma did not even speak Russian.

15

M115 – During Inara’s third visit, Ausma is more distant and barely talks to her.

M116 – Ausma’s dog bites Inara.

16

M117 – After the war more than 30 million people had been removed from their homes, referred to as DPs – Displaced Persons.

M118 – About 120,000 Latvians were DPs.

M119 – Latvians made the acronym to mean Dieva Putnini – God’s little birds – always in motion.

M120 – The early days in the camp were run by waiting and uncertainty.

M121 – The camp was an anti-sanitary place.

M122 – Livija’s daughter Maruta caught polio in the camp and spent a long time alone in the nearby hospital with the parents allowed to visit only rarely.

M123 – Reunited with his family at the camp, Emils suffered stress and anger attacks.

M124 – Before reaching the camp, Emils had been interrogated by the Allies for his involvement in the German army.

M125 – In the everyday life, Emils was mostly silent and resigned.

M126 – Emils and Livija welcomed two more children while in the camp.

M127 – After the war's end, few countries offered to resettle the DPs.

M128 – Latvians in the refugee camp learned English and showcased their skills, but also tried to preserve their culture by singing and dancing, and gardening.

M129 – A university was founded in the refugee camp, Emils was a highly regarded lecturer.

M130 – Over time, more and more families left the camp, but Emils and Livija were among the last to leave having completed a long check and consideration process.

M131 – Livija feared that the seizures Maruta had developed could hinder their chance at relocation, so she hid it from the doctors.

M132 – The family relocated to Tacoma, Washington sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation.

M133 – The jobs Livija and Emils worked in the USA were low-qualified physical jobs, as opposed to their office jobs in Latvia.

M134 – The family did not throw away anything.

17

M135 – Upon her next visit to Latvia, Inara spends time with her cousin who is hesitant to leave the countryside after having graduated university, because she is too attached to the nature.

M136 – In the countryside, where many people live in terrible conditions, the postman often is the only contact person.

M137 – In Latvian folklore, forest is a magical, powerful place.

18

M138 – Ausma and Inara talk about Siberia.

M139 – Ausma reveals that life was not always sad.

M140 – The labour was extremely hard in the harsh weather conditions and the workers, mostly women, worked ten hour shifts for weeks on end.

M141 – Food was scarce and one could only get some food if they worked or could find something in the rough nature.

M142 – Ausma was the only provider for her family.

M143 – Warm clothes were vitally necessary, but many people did not have them at first.

M144 – After getting badly injured, Ausma could not take time to heal, but had to continue working through the pain.

- M145 – After receiving some owed money from Gulbene, the family bought a cow and started earning money selling milk.
- M146 – The family moved into their own house and tried to live a somewhat normal life.
- M147 – Four years into their exile, Stalin died and the exiles began writing letters pleading to let them return home.
- M148 – Another four years later, the family was allowed to go back to Latvia.
- M149 – Inara found that the family was exiled for being rich peasants – kulak.
- M150 – The family was not able to return to *Lembi*, because it had been absorbed by the state.

19

- M151 – Both Livija and her family unsuccessfully tried to contact the other for more than ten years.
- M152 – After regaining contact, the family feared to communicate openly and wrote their letters softening the real meanings of words, not revealing the full extent of their reality.
- M153 – Soon, the letters from Latvia, to Livija's sorrow, turned into reports of life in the countryside, when she wanted to learn more about her relatives.
- M154 – Livija and Emils sent money to Latvia.
- M155 – Communication through post was slow and sometimes the letters never reached their destination.
- M156 – After Latvia's independence, owners were able to redeem their property that had been collectivised and Ausma's daughter reclaimed *Lembi*.
- M157 – For a while, the farm was repaired and running, but modern life took its toll and the family could not sustain the farm.
- M158 – Ausma resolved that it was best to leave *Lembi* for good and hold it only in their memories, in which for Ausma it is the only true home.
- M159 – Inara found that the name of the farm could have come from the Finno-Ugric word for love.

20

- M160 – Ausma and Harijs' horse runs away.
- M161 – While looking for the horse, Inara takes a run along the old war road and remembers her visit to the house her grandmother's brother Janis had lived in after *Lembi* was sold.
- M162 – In the house, Inara had found Livija's portrait but had left it there.
- M163 – Upon telling about the portrait to Ausma, Inara realised that she had let her grandmother go.

### Appendix 3: Keywords, Raw Data

No.	Keyword
1	Like
2	Ausma
3	Back
4	Time
5	Grandmother
6	Now
7	Just
8	Old
9	Way
10	Still
11	First
12	Years
13	Day
14	Never
15	Long
16	Family
17	Grandfather
18	Something
19	Even
20	Know
21	Left
22	Latvia
23	See
24	Come
25	Home
26	New
27	Dead
28	Mother
29	Might
30	Someone
31	Always
32	Last
33	Maybe
34	Father
35	War
36	Children
37	Two
38	House
39	Life
40	Place
41	Much
42	Riga
43	Latvian
44	People
45	Things
46	Also
47	Great
48	Make
49	Another
50	Farm
51	Inside

<b>No.</b>	<b>Keyword</b>
52	Next
54	Finally
54	Find
55	Ever
56	Enough
57	Hands
58	Take
59	Man
60	Away
61	Made
62	Little
63	Harijs
64	Name
65	Hand
66	Lembi
67	Room
68	Woman
69	Words
70	Days
71	Let
72	Nothing
73	Night
74	Already
75	work
76	Living
77	Three
78	Later
79	World
80	Behind
81	Sometimes
82	Help
83	Lost
84	Trying
85	Edge
86	End
87	Eyes
88	Must
89	Stories
90	Think
91	Brother
92	Came
93	Fields
94	Land
95	Whether
96	Livija
97	Tell
98	Told
99	Want
100	Cows

## Appendix 4: Keyword Groups

### Keyword group No. 1 – Family

No.	Keyword
1	Ausma
2	grandmother
3	family
4	grandfather
5	mother
6	father
7	children
8	Harijs
9	brother
10	Livija
11	stories
12	words
13	eyes
14	dead
15	name

### Keyword group No. 2 – Home

No.	Keyword
1	Latvia
2	home
3	house
4	place
5	Riga
6	<i>Lembi</i>
7	room

### Keyword group No. 3 – The Unknown

No.	Keyword
1	years
2	people
3	things
4	man
5	woman
6	night
7	day
8	world
9	way
10	time

<b>No.</b>	<b>Keyword</b>
11	edge
12	war
13	life

Keyword group No. 4 – Nature

<b>No.</b>	<b>Keyword</b>
1	farm
2	hands
3	work
4	fields
5	land
6	cows

## Appendix 5: Keyword Concordances

Premodifiers	Keyword
Aunt	Ausma
Great-great, great	grandmother
Whole, long lost, von Tranze, affluent	family
Great-great, great	grandfather
Surrogate	mother
-	father
Dead, small, older, misbehaving, village, quickest	children
-	Harijs
Little	brother
Grandmother, sister	Livija
Old, war, different, long, rambling, choice, resurrection, family, same, bear, startling, DP	stories
Right, labored, perceptive, picturesque, written, German, regular, old, mumbling, next	words
Wet, tender, blue-gray, good, pale, old, open, new, weeping	eyes
Newly, assumed	dead
Last, code	name
Communist, free	Latvia
Childhood, last, old, physical, true, new, funeral, former, nursing, future, country, only	home
Little, bowed, weary, manor, abandoned, old	house
Regular, incredible, appointed, easy, happiest, different, very, comfortable, assigned, original, new, specific	place
Downtown	Riga
-	<i>Lembi</i>
Sitting, little, dining, white-walled, darkened, broken, paneled, nearly empty, small, scoured	room
Consecutive, recent, earliest, hunger, frantic, later, lost, chaotic, war, Communist, passing	years
Local, old, important, sickest, displaced	people
Remaining, the saddest, forgotten, unspoken, lost, living, sacred, rotting, harmful, visible, small, strange, simple, unthinking, massive, lumbering, rotted, solemn, turgid, ponderous	things
Old, luckiest, little, Jewish, elderly, one-legged	man
Young, unsmiling, married, beautiful, old, single	woman
Wedding	night
New, good, perfect, June	day
Known, other, every-day, existing, living, new, physical	world
Suspicious, Latvian, queer, substantive, strange	way
Lost, long, hard, last, given, eternal, real, enough	time
Eastern, yellowing, westernmost, very	edge
Second World, civil, Cold	war
New, old, real, sweet, simple, former, peasant, adult, whole, every-day, half-	life
Collective, re-created, old, chicken, poultry, family, nearby	farm
Insistent, empty, big, invisible, chapped, rough, little, reluctant, callused, riven	hands
Good, factory, teaching	work
Surrounding, shorn, overwintered, hemp, vegetable, rutted, blistered, rye, barley, reclaimed, secret, caraway, green, cabbage	fields
New, passing, private	land
Heavily uddered, dead, voluptuous, milk, spindly, Siberian, sick	cows

## Dokumentārā lapa

Bakalaura darbs „Image of Latvia in Inara Verzemnieks’ memoir “Among the Living and the Dead”” (Latvijas tēls Ināras Vērzemnieces memuārā “Starp dzīvajiem un mirušajiem”) izstrādāts LU Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

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