



Between Stockholm & Turku 2nd September, 2022

Dear Vincent,

Sending postcards to each other is a wonderful suggestion for a method of dialogue. I am sorry for not getting back to you sooner. But I guess a couple of months is not such a long time from the historical perspective of postcards.

I am writing these notes to you while travelling along the old postal road, the maritime route that was the medium of communication between the capitals of bygone empires, between East and West. In the life time of this young sea, which has been shapeshifting since it emerged from under kilometres thick glacier at the end of the last ice age about 10 000 years ago, those few decades that humans and their letters have been flying over these waters is only a fleeting moment. Yet already in that briefest of times we seem to have forgotten how these waters connect us.

The brackish water that now carries me back home is not really a sea at all, but rather a large river estuary. Here, far from the narrow strait that connects the Baltic Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, the low salinity of the sea water is close to that of human tears. I look down on the ripples on the skin of the sea, from the detached floating perspective offered by the glittery cruise ship interior. It is hard to remember the intimate entanglement of these water bodies - the sea in formation and my own leaky embodiment.

Yet this view point from slightly above, tinted with pink and blue lights, already has a feel of the past, of nostalgia infused with embarrassment. No futurism left here, although this may

very well be the path back to the embrace of the waves, as the descent from the skies becomes ever more urgent.

The ship slowly passes islands that stand as siluetes against the darkening autumn sky. This watery path of my journey flows through an expanded archipelago of thousands of isles that steadily keep on rising from the waves, as they have done on these Northern shores of the Baltic Sea since the weight of the glacier lifted. As the water gives way to the ship and, at a different pace, to the land bouncing back, the retreating ice from the past haunts the present.

The increasingly heavy rainfalls that the deepening climate crisis has brought upon this region, at least for the time being, is gradually turning this sea into a large freshwater pond, to the shock of the marine creatures who have evolved to be at home in these brackish waters. The rains also flush a wealth of nutrients and microplastics with them from the lands through streams and rivers to this vast estuary and onward to the North Sea and the Arctic. This water that surrounds me is a medium between here and everywhere, between myriad different temporalities, between the pasts and the futures.

The darkness has now thickened so that I can only see the surface of the water in the reflections of lights glittering along the shorelines, where humans have been communicating with each other by lighting fires as long as there has been any land.

Warmest regards, Taru