

DECLARATION OF LOVE TO LANDSCAPE IN THE NORTH

This Land where the sun never sets

once it has risen
where darkness is endless
when twilight falls.

This Land where the wind blows coldly even from the South
thickens the blood
burdens the mind.

This Land with mountains vaster than meadows
marshes deeper than lakes
rivers like graves among peaks.

This Land where the earthly and heavenly Lord
has been giving and taking
after his word.

This Land where sharp words are spread
and the tidings of Love
remain in the Bible

This Land where Life is neighbouring Death
where the two of them, from the beginning,
have shared and shared alike

This Land where women after the stormy night
have recognized a woollen mitten at the shore
in their first morning of widowhood.

This Land where grandfathers, fathers and brothers
built coffins in competition
and rowed their kinsmen
to the grave.

This Land where the light strikes your eyes
where frost makes you crouch and cringe
and the long nights wear you down.

This Land where envy is denser than grass
where pettiness is inherited
and restrains growth.

In this Land the belief of man
is hardened in the forge
Love is on trial
and the hope, so often peeled off
for time and again to be replaced.⁵

⁵ "Kjaerlighedserklaering til landskap in Nord," a previously unpublished poem translated into English from Norwegian by Gerd Aase Pedersen with some further editing by Kaarina Kailo and Rauna Kuokkanen. It was first recited by the author in Harstad, Norway at a Northern cultural event in 1988.