

Stranger,

I hope you know me. I hope you grew up in the dusty canyons I did. I hope you've grown along a second place, and that you had the privilege of that second place being a river.

I hope you know the love I have for The River. I hope you know love, too: the feeling of your heart stopping, your chest caving in, of overwhelming love – when Dad comes home from work, and I run to him; the moment an immovable force meets an unshakable object.

I hope you know I'm *super* afraid of fish. Their small, wild eyes; how despite living for 18 years on this second place, I've never heard a fish make a noise or show fear or love (We have a shared custody of The River, the sturgeon and I). I hope you know that kelp freaks me out – slimy in a way regular, dry greenery *never* needs to be. And I hope you recognize how love can persist, despite fear.

I hope you know that I grew up in fields of yellow. How Grandpa always told us about The River being the understructure of the barley and wheat that stains my skin and makes my young fingers sticky. Later, how I learn in school that over half of the energy I (*We, They, Us*) consume is from the concrete wall in My River. And I hope you know the story of the Salmon, of sitting in a hard plastic chair, gripping a G-2 pen, and knowing that what supports your family is what kills another.

Stranger, I hope you know love, I hope you know pain. I hope you have dunked your head under the water of a fast-moving current, and felt the goosebumps rise along your skin. I hope you know how you *swear* your curls become more pronounced when doused with the fresh water. I hope you've known Woodie Guthrie's lyrics since they were taught to you in the second grade – I hope you're proud to be from *the big Grand Coulee country*, and *the land I love the best*.

I hope you know conflict. I hope you know guilt. I hope you know that Love and Inaction are the antithesis of each other, and the jagged pain in crisis of consciousness.

Stranger, I hope you know me.