



FIRST DAY IN FINLAND

BY MELINA GOTTLING

The house is canopied in green,
and the rain doesn't fall to the
ground.

It sifts through the leaves,
making a hollow sound
as it falls on the ferns and goose-
berry bushes
that are under the eaves
and the dripline of the trees.
I can hear the roots drinking and
swelling,
grateful for the cool rain
that feeds them—
rain from the Baltic Sea that keeps
me inside
against Grandma's windowsill
with damp morning glory clinging
to the window panes
and a whole country waiting
outside.

I'm stuck in the white-washed
cottage,
filled with the warm breath of
blueberry tarts
and music from 1950s Hollywood
playing in the dining room.
Grandma is at the table, humming
and making cloth bodies
for the heads, hands, and feet
made of clay and spread out on
the table
like a doll's morgue.

The Finnish/English dictionary
sits open
on the table next to my Grandma.
I sit down across from her—
she smiles.

I relate to the gooseberry bushes
And love rain.