

Home on the Imjin River (English)

The river
frozen over a few nights before
frosted fingers weaving together
until they held heavily
Thick ice warming the canal like a blanket.

It reminded him of home

He stood, hockey gear
covering every loose limb
a stick in his hand, outward curve in the blade
upward curve in red lips
Sucking in swirling flurries

He missed his home

Warm dinners with family
Freeing forests of maple trees
Letters from lovers across seas

The twenty-one-day trip,
from a small French-Canadian town
To the country he could not place on a map

Here, they played war games
Passing soldiers back and forth between fields
Hoping they would not be the next sacrificial pawn
but patriotism rose high in their chests
Inspired by their fathers and from a decade ago.

He had found the Injim River,
coated in thick glass
A frozen canvas

Only

missing the sketches of skate marks, deep scratches on its surface

After a desperate plea

The equipment delivered to the rink

The crowds full along the dikes

Pushing onto the ice

Eying the puck smartly

Remembering the games in Quebec

The river,

Frozen over

Had made him another home.

By Braidyn Chang