

Letter in Icelandic from the Ninette San

[John K. Samson](#)

You'll recall from the sagas I hope Grettir's last stand at Drangey
How his grip on the sword made his enemies cut off his hand
If he'd fled here instead, and had tasted this terrible coffee
Or read these letters you sent he'd surrender, and lay the blade down
And it's Halloween
Skinny ghosts dress like cowboys and rest at the railing by my door
On their way from the children's ward
Bev Monroe and his Pembina Valley boys play at the party
And I practice my English on nurses, "Oh, that's a nice name."
And they may ask for mine, but the burns on my back from the x-rays
Say I shouldn't show anyone anything ever again
In another year
I'll be buried or shivering here.
Coughing at the grey spittoon
Painted orange by the harvest moon
Pack up mother's clothes
Drive her down to the new Betel Home
Sell the boat to Arnison
And then go stand up straight
In the place you're longing for
And don't write to me anymore

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