

MY STREET

When it rains, my street smells like washing powder. I don't know where the smell comes from, I wonder how a street so dirty can smell so clean. Some days the trash is piling up and I have to hold my breath and whenever there is no rain, my street smells like weed. A whole street smelling like my old roommate's bedroom.

I've started looking out of my window. There's a windowsill in my new flat, that has just enough room for me to sit on, not quite enough for all the plants I've started collecting manically. I can distinguish the people who talk to themselves now by their voices and by the conspiracy theories they scream about, I know the old man who collects empty bottles and I start to recognise the same moms holding their children's hands, rushing along.

Most of the time, the street smells like kebab. The Armenian place on the corner leaves its doors wide open, it smells like kebab and stale oil. *Barev tses*, I think whenever I pass, but I have not been inside yet.

A wave of air reaches me on top of my windowsill on the third floor from time to time, aftershave and cologne, mixed with whiskey and beer. Across the street is a bar, I can hear faint music all night long. My neighbours warned me about this place. I don't know anything apart from the fact that I like their lights and I like the wind chime on their door and I like how the men sit outside and talk through the dark and I like how they once said they liked my new bike.

My street smells thick and foggy, my street smells like weed and Armenian *Khorovats*, my street smells like gin and tequila, like aftershave and perfume, my street smells like trash and flowers and sun and wind.

You smell different. I can sense it when you stand on the street below my window. When you reach out and wave to me. And I know it for a fact when you wrap your arms around me.

When it rains, my street smells like washing powder.

And you smell like home.



Hannah Essing just finished her degree at the WWU. Originally from Essen, she studied European Studies in Passau, Bavaria and spent two years abroad in Cyprus, Armenia, and Estonia. In her master thesis she analysed the media discourse on gender and race on the Fridays for Future movement. She semi-settled in Bonn where she works as a PR consultant and writes her first novel.