

## When It's in Your Blood

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Some things, you find, are in your blood. They are so because of where you were born. Because your parents and your community were who they were. Because you carry the same genetic markers as your ancestors, but most importantly because you carry their history. Some things, you find, are in your blood. But what happens when your blood turns against you? The very blood coursing through your veins starts to poison you or rushes through your body as if to escape it, taking your life with it? Do you lay down until the flow of that river, the one giving you life, dries up, or do you listen to the message it is carrying in and out of you?

I was taken on this journey with Jennifer. Translating a story is always a very powerful experience. We cannot translate well without appealing to our capacity to empathize with the other, with the characters in whose shoes we walk for a mile—or a 300 km trek—and without learning that we can see ourselves—past, present, future selves—in just about anyone. And when a character learns a lesson which is so dear to us because it shaped a big part of who we are today, it is even more powerful.

Of course, different people will see different things in Jennifer's story. So here, I speak of what *I* see, of what it meant for me to translate her story. I see her strength, her resilience, and her kindness. I see that despite what we feel is in our blood, like putting others' needs before our own, there might come a time when that very blood sends us a different message. It might tell us, as the river flows, that taking care of ourselves should not carry guilt, that it is simply part of the gratitude we show to life, to being alive; and that by taking care of our own body, mind, and spirit, we honour the river which in turn allows us to be the kind and loving human beings we thrived to be all along—not out of duty, but out of love.

Some things, you find, are in your blood. I find that the one thing that is in our blood is to learn and grow. Thank you, Jennifer.