

Chapter 1

She loved the snow. For the tiny pieces of white brought a handle, or rather thousands of tiny handles. Each flake gave presence to the invisible that was already there, but could not be sensed. Riding on her motorcycle in the summer, she could, with effort, believe that she was cutting through the world, everything blurry and unnatural. But this snow, the first of the year, let her see the air separating before her. It allowed her eyes, rather than her mind, to tell her that she was riding in that delicate seam of inexistence. Like tracers hinted at the deadly stream of fellow bullets, so the snow uncloaked the air which was not merely the space between everything, but was comprised of very real and tangible substances: nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, and here, in Kiev, Strontium-90 and cesium-137.