Norwegian Krone, 1891

My grandfather once gave me a silver coin worth two ore. On one side, a rampant lion, crowned, and on the back, the number two, encircled by a wreath of linden leaves.

I carried this coin in my pocket every day, going out and coming in, while playing, reading in the town library, waxing my skis, or meeting classmates to sing every evening in the pine-ring square. I would slide my hand down to feel its rigid edges, its markings raised in relief. It smelled of his tobacco, his cologne.

It never slipped out, even as I hung, upside down, in the tree I’d climbed, swaying in the breeze off the fjord, nor when leaping from rock to rock below the jagged cliffs.

The year stamped on its face was 1891, the year of his birth. I give this coin now to you, wrapped in purple tissue paper, tied with an orange ribbon. As you move about, as this coin jangles with its mates, rubbing themselves smooth and shiny, think of me. Touch its gleaming surface. Finger its impressions. Keep it safe.