

Patriotism

I love my country.

I love the mist

that rises from the river

before the sun.

I love the sea

crashing a shingle beach

or gently chasing dunlin up the sand

and I love the kites

circling over slate grey roofs

after a century away.

I love the sound

of cricket commentary

murmuring inside a greenhouse.

I love a pint of Pride

pulled under a pub ceiling

still stained with nicotine.

I love the sound of a blackbird

singing in the morning

and the dead of night.

So when I ask you

to offer asylum to those in need

please don't tell me

I do not love my country

When I tell you

we have people sleeping on the street

for want of a roof

please don't tell me

it's their fault.

When I praise the kids

who tore down a slaver's statue

and threw it in the river

please don't tell me

they are destroying history.

The eyes of the old

dying behind glass

saw history being made

by those who failed

to keep them safe.

Tell me I do not love my country

Go on

I dare you

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Every lie we tell incurs a debt to the truth. Sooner or later, that debt is paid: Valery Legasov, #Chernobyl episode 5

Chris Russell-Catton