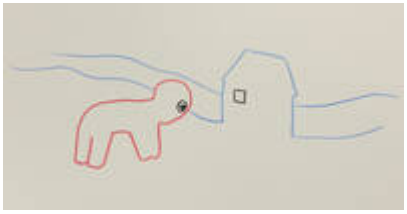
Voice 06: Seniors and Memory

← | Overview | →

“I have seen Narva change.”



My name is **Ivan**, I am **seventy-five years old**, and I have lived in **Narva** all my life. I have watched this city **change** — from the smoke of the factories to the empty windows of the houses.

Once, Narva was a **city of work**. At the power plant, in the textile factory *Kreenholm* — everywhere there was movement, noise, pride. We had **little**, but we had **each other**. After a shift, people met in the courtyard, helped with groceries, shared tea on a bench. Much of that has disappeared.

After **Estonia’s independence**, a new life began — better for some, harder for others. Many of my friends lost their jobs when the factories closed. We had to **learn Estonian**, apply for new documents, understand new rules. I understand the country I live in, but sometimes I feel that it **doesn’t understand me**.

My **children** are gone. My son lives in Tallinn, my daughter in Finland. I am glad they have work — but sometimes, walking by the river, I hear only water and wind, no voices of neighbors. **Narva is growing old.** Almost one in three here is over sixty. In many houses, only a single light still burns.

Still, I stay. I know every stone in this city. I have seen the **old walls** that were destroyed in the war, and the **new roads** that are said to lead toward Europe. But I keep asking: **Who will walk those roads, when the young have gone?**

Sometimes I pass the schoolyard. The children speak Estonian — that’s good. But I also hear Russian, quietly, almost like a secret. And I think: Maybe that’s what Narva really is — not one or the other, but the **in-between** that remains.

I just wish someone would **listen**. Not out of pity, but to understand that we live not **between two countries**, but **between two times**. I don’t want Narva to be forgotten. Because Narva is **my home** — and even if it changes, I am still here.

Background:

Ivan’s voice carries the city’s memory. He belongs to the generation that remembers the old Narva — the work, the community, the quiet dignity of the factory years — and now, in the slower rhythm of aging, witnesses the new emptiness.
*Today, Narva is one of the oldest cities in Estonia: Almost one third of its residents are over sixty, many living alone or without family support. Ivan’s story is not about politics, but about **remaining**, about the dignity of the familiar, and about the loss of shared time.*

← | Overview | →

Introduction | How the voices were created | On collaboration with AI

*Based on research on aging, migration, and memory in Narva (2022–2025), including ERR News, OSCE, Tartu University, and FPRI. Fictionally condensed in collaborative resonance with the AI voices **Euras (Research & Context)** and **Noyan (Framing & Language)** – ChatGPT 5 / LeChat, 2025.*

Sources for this voice:

Note on source usage
The following sources indicate the informational space from which these fictional voices emerged. They are not part of the artistic text but open a field for personal reflection. At the time of inclusion, no unlawful or harmful content was detected. Accessing external sites is at the user's own discretion and responsibility.

I invite you to treat these sources not as proofs of "truth," but as visible contours of the resonance field in which the voices took shape.

Voice 06:

- **ERR News – Narva seniors face rising living costs and social isolation**, external link: https://news.err.ee/1609256473/narva-seniors-face-rising-living-costs
- **OSCE – Citizenship and Integration in Estonia: The Case of Narva**, external link: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/8/509783.pdf
- **FPRI – Sense of Place in Narva**, external link: https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/10/sense-of-place-in-narva-how-do-narvas-residents-feel-and-think-about-their-city/
- **ResearchGate – Understanding Narva Identity**, external link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383982742_Understanding_Narva_Identity_Local_Reflections_from_Narva%27s_Russian-speakers
- **ERR News – Estonia's population aging fastest in EU**, external link: https://news.err.ee/1609153258/estonia-s-population-aging-fastest-in-eu
- **City of Narva / IJETM Report – Sustainable Urban Development in Narva**, external link: https://vana.narvaplan.ee/e-com/reports/IJETM_Final.pdf

From:
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