



2021

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Elena Uhlenkamp

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Recommended Citation

Uhlenkamp, Elena (2021) "A vendor at the Grand Forks, ND, farmer's market baffled me," *Floodwall Magazine*: Vol. 2: Iss. 7, Article 45.

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/floodwall-magazine/vol2/iss7/45>

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A vendor at the Grand Forks, ND, farmer's market baffled me

Elena Uhlenkamp

Where're you from?

A pretty simple question.

I'm from Minnesota.

A very simple answer.

You don't have a Minnesotan accent.

Wait... I don't have a Minnesotan accent? Is he unable to hear the 10,000 lakes lapping over my tongue? Or our real state bird in the buzz of my Zs? Do I really not have a Minnesotan accent?

Your accent is similar to the Mennonites.

...Huh? How's that possible? I wasn't raised in their traditions. The only times I've been around them is shopping with my grandparents at Cherry Grove Market, getting sliced lunch meats and bowls of hard ice cream.

Well, one of my grandmothers was from England.

But...I don't know how much of her accent I really have. I've spent more time at home surrounded by cattails in peat-filled wetlands, and fields of corn, soybeans, and alfalfa enclosed in woods of poplars, pine, maple, and oak. I didn't see her often enough, but her accent of the Motherland was the closest one to the Mennonites I've been exposed to.

I may have some of her accent.

But I also have great-grandparents from Germany and Austria whom I have never met. They passed away before I was born. And both of my parents have been born and raised in the Minnesotan State. My sister and I had been raised on the same farm as Dad. Sled down the same hill by the crabapple tree. Watched movies in the same Cozy Theater. Got candy from the same Railroads Day parade. How can it be that I don't have a Minnesotan accent with all those family experiences?

Are you sure you're Minnesotan?

There's no question about it.

Yes.

Yeah, I may not have the Uff-das, or the

You Betchas, or the Dontcha Knows,
but...

I'm sure.

I still have the long Os for home, the wide
As to fit bites of apple crisp, the hard
Rs for the raging Mississippi, the slight
inflection imitating the rolling hills, and
I can't forget my grandma's hamburger
hotdish. Because yes, I do come from
Minnesota, and I do have the accent of
the North Star State.

Thanks for the coffee sample. Have a great rest of your day.

You as well!

Elena Uhlenkamp is an English major from a small town in the heart of Minnesota. She enjoys reading and writing fiction, especially fantasy, science fiction, and horror. Besides writing fiction, she likes trying her hand at photography and writing poetry, along with enjoying escape rooms with family and friends. Elena is working on a series that mixes sentient robots with demons from another dimension.