



# Oulunsalo Fiction

The complete trilogy

Ice Road | Talisman | Helicopters |



# Jani Ojala

2016  
2017  
2019

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# **ICE ROAD**

Emotional fiction.



The ferry doesn't run at night-time Ice road is in use

## First Words

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Umm ice road as in aaaaaum... Like a hard path maybe, a  
hard  
slippery path that you have to get on. It's hard but, you  
must cross it.  
And eventually you do, but with struggle and hard work...  
Am I close?

—Ivan Grgona

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Is it like a memoir of sorts, does it delve in a metaphor? I  
mean,  
roads are usually symbolic of journeys in any context.

—Jonathon Allen

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Frozen bay maybe... Or maybe some symbolic  
representation of  
your hometown peninsula.

—Aravind Nair

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Ice Road...probably a metaphor for your journey in life, like  
driving  
down an icy road, it's slippery and you have/had to be very  
cautious.

—Dennis Grant

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## Acknowledgments

Van Morrison

Never before have I been able to credit something I've done  
to one  
single song. Your song "Astral Weeks", however, was the  
first spark  
of Ice Road. Other things would pile on top and ignite, hence  
this  
book.

Thank you, for waking up a dreamer in me.

Richard O'Connor

For your book *Undoing Depression*. Real insightful, helpful,  
and one  
of the major inspirations of this book.

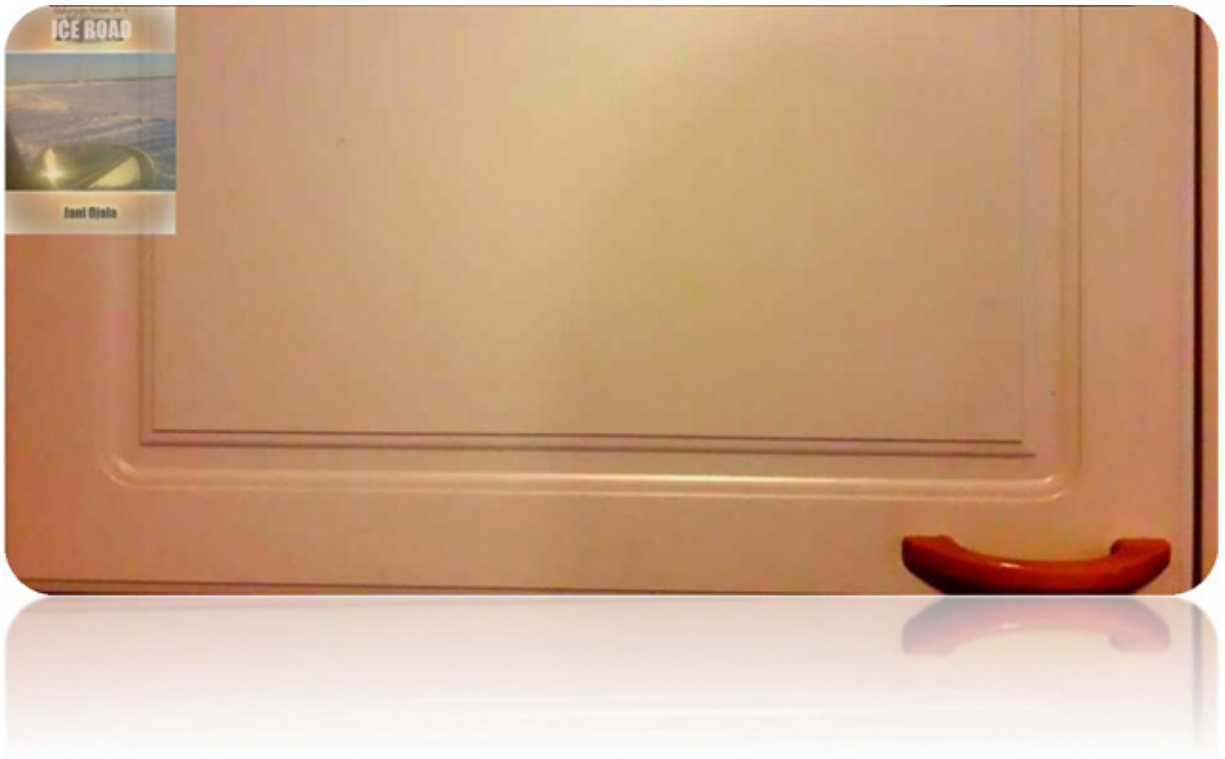
Family - my mother, my father, my two brothers, my sister-  
in-law,  
my two nephews Mikael and Samuel

For listening, being there, and being the proper surrounding.  
This  
book would not be possible without you.



# **PLAY 1**

## ***The Loneliness***



## Chapter 1

### The Cabinet Door, Pt. 1



The slightly hairy, tanned palm of a middle aged man ever-so-slightly missed its target and landed on a nightstand on the bedside. The resting man lifted his fist from the surface of the table, and got the job done with the next smack. Moments of a slow summer's morning rolled on by. He was sleepy, with clouded instincts, staring at the brown, as-normal-as-can-be wall of his bedroom. Time dragged along and a tired hand fell down to the side of the bed, searched for a sec and picked up a pair of jeans.

After dressing up while half-conscious, the man started - fully dressed - to drag himself out. As he opened the door of

his bedroom, there was the view of the living room, which he scrolled past, to get to the kitchen. His unsure, tired eyes struggled to stay on track. *The coffee. Gotta get the coffee.*

His old ways, rehearsed in all the routine-*dulled* mornings of the past, guided him to take the coffee bag from the cabinet. He barely even noticed himself digging up a spoon and drowning it in coffee grounds. He laid his eyes on the cabinet door while executing the morning routine. It was white and figure-less, stripped of the beauty it *must'a possessed when it was just a tree somewhere. What do I give a fuck.*

He got lost in thought again, this time more aggressive ones. For a stretched second he stared at that cabinet door because it was just, a comfortable layout. *Am I gonna wake up this morning at all?*

Something snapped and he tried to remember what was in his hands. In a hurry to make up time for some reason, he started pouring the grounds into the coffee maker. He was so familiar with that coffee maker that I could make coffee all day long without looking at it, even. The eyes still hadn't left their sight from that cabinet door. This aint funny anymore. He looked at that coffee maker again, and there was a pile of coffee grounds that laid on top of the unopened cap. *This morning's too **long**...*

Approximately ten minutes later it was all done, he had finally got the goddamn coffee to boil. He stepped outside to greet the morning with a forced smile to the sky, which never responds anyway... Something reminded him to get back to his morning hurries.

As he got to the mailbox, he opened it up and saw the corner of the morning paper peaking out. He shoved his hand in the box, got the paper and started walking back. On his way he felt a small, quiet but unpleasant vibration next to his thigh and got the phone out of the pocket, answering:

— Tapani Kumavaara.

Tapani listened to restless complaint from the phone and tried to sneak a word in:

— Miska, hey... Miska! If you could... I can't help you right now, I'm in the middle of some shit.

— This is real this time, asshole! I need your help ASAP.

Tapani stopped walking at his front door.

— Sorry, I gotta go now, the guy just arrived.

— What guy?

— I'm driving this guy to the city. Listen, I gotta go now. I'll call you later.

Frustrated, he shoved the phone back in his pocket, opened the door and stepped in, made his way back to the kitchen and threw the morning paper to the table. The upper left corner of the paper met the surface of the table first, and Tapani watched the paper landing on its back.

- --I wonder if everyone leaves their paper on the table like this? What's the traditional way people have of protecting their papers as they put them away for a little while to get a cup of coffee after a struggle like mine?

- What danger does this little reflex-initi--

- M What am I doing?

In a daze, Tapani picked up the phone again and made a call... The phone tooted. Soon, the voice bothering him outside just a minute ago, responded:

— Hello?

— You mean you need help right now?

— Yeah, you wouldn't even know how... Man, I'm not sure, but I think I just heard this guy breathing, and--

— Not on the phone. I'll meet you there in a half an hour.

— Okay, sounds cool, but what if it--

— You already know.

≈≈≈≈≈≈

Business as us'

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He looked at the front page of the paper, which said something about some Soisalo-family and their "life as a family — a renewed one."

— "I figured I could drive by your place after I drop the guy off", Tapani squeezed some final words to the phone call still going on.

There was an answer on the phone he couldn't make out, because he was so concentrated on the paper - interested in the main story. "OK", he quickly said to the phone and hung up. There was a new fascination in his eyes as he scrolled the pages of the newspaper, turning to page → for some more information.



## Chapter 2

### The Head



A black sedan parked in the driveway of a house with red, wooden walls - Miska's. Out of the car, came Tapani, unobtrusively wiping sweat off his forehead and proceeding to the back.yard, in a hurry. The backdoor of the garage was open. *That's where he'd be.* Tapani rushed into the garage and saw Miska rolling the decapitated head of some asshole on the floor. Miska looked up, startled, and then recognized his friend. They both fell tacit. *Is this even real?*

Tapani looked at the head and felt something with no explanatory words for it. He looked his friend in the eye. A new level to the depth in the look on Miska's eyes emerged; like they were asking for help.

— "I am rather speechless." Tapani informed his buddy.

Miska continued rolling the dead head to the grass of the backyard.

— Don't fucking take it *out!* Where do you think it's going? Under your backyard?

— "Are there any other ideas!?" Miska shouted.

Tapani just gazed. He didn't even want to think about what he was witnessing. Miska was morose still, and he expressed that by glares at his buddy, who could care less - he was still in a mixture of amazement and fright about that human head on the floor.

— "...You got a smoke, by the way?" he asked, turning to look at his friend.

— I think I do, not sure. My mind's been racing the whole morning and I've been chain-smoking like a motherfucker.

Miska slipped his right palm into a jacket-pocket and flapped the hem of his open jacket around in search of floaters. He ripped the pack out and offered it. Tapani got it. A cigarette slid out to his palm and he placed it in between his lips, then looking inside the open pack.

— "There's three left." He stated.

— Oh, yeah, coo'.

— Here, you take one too.

—No. I'm feeling weak.

—Doesn't matter, take it now.

Miska silently consented. He put a cigarette in his mouth, and as he was toking on it, the blowin' wind made him turn his eyes, and they'd meet the sight of that human head again. He took the next small hit, blew it out against the wind.

The head fell down on its ear, and caught Tapani's attention as well.

— "Alright this has taken enough", Miska said, frustrated. "Do you have any idea what to do with this? I trust that you can say at least something... Maybe offer a more objective view, shit, I

don't know what I want, but this much I do know: I *don't* wanna get--"

— "--How'd he die?" Tapani *shamelessly* interrupted. Miska turned a tired and nervous look to his buddy, starting to explain:

— I killed him. We was having an argument about something very very... close to heart...He wasn't--

— --Yeah I don't care about your fight. You know what? I might have an idea.

— Oh *please*, do tell. Your thoughts are specifically what I've been waiting to hear the whole night and the rainy morning. And God only knows, you got those; enough to fill a book.

— "Thanks, I suppose... Well, my thoughts are: the decapitation you've already done, was the right start..." Tapani explained his side, while watching Miska put the head back up, standing on its neck. "...A step in the right direction. But don't roll it out to the backyard! You don't even have a hole and those neighbors are bound to see you mysteriously digging a mysterious hole - which you won't be finishing in hours, *not with that back* - and you'll have to stay up the whole night doing it. Miska, these things are *doable* and all, you can do it on the low and get away with it, but please... Use your head."

— I didn't ask you here to make stupid fucking jokes.

— *Ask?*

— Oh my *God*...

— The first thing that you do is *stay calm*. Take in some air once in a while, focus on the slow and glorious burn of that cigarette, or whatever you're doing *at the moment*. It's all about the moment. Think about those repetitive, yet inviting, routine-esque shapes in that cloud of smoke you



breathe out. Everybody has a reason for picking up this dangerous habit. Be it the guilty pleasure, temporarily clearing your throat, looking more busy or businesslike than you are, or just relaxing. Whatever the reason is, *own it*, be one with it and let it... be. Don't focus on the severed human head which you mercilessly cut off from the live human being, who probably has a family and a--

— "Stop *fucking* fucking around, you're *not funny!*" Miska exclaimed.

— "Alright, let's just get in now and cut it up inside", spoke Tapani, fully focused, not a sign of fatigue in his posture anymore. *Funny how that happened.*

He picked up the head and walked in the house through the garage-door, holding it. Miska was still sitting around at the exit-door. Alluva sudden, Tapani yelled at him:

— Why do you have so many rolls of garbage-bags, though? Don't bullshit me, Miska; you were planning on this. There's three of these.

— There are? Well I must'a overbought them. I can't recall. I'm stressed.

— I still don't buy it for shit that you're stressed over *taking a life*. You've done that before.

— "Will you *fucking shut the fuck up* and get in?!" Miska clapped back.

HALF AN HOUR LATER:

Tapani was standing in front of a window, at the end of the upstairs-hallway of Miska's house, smoking a cigarette. He quit oggling at the cigarette and positioned it in between his lips, took a couple of quick revitalizing tokes while simultaneously blowing out the nose, blinked and zoomed his sight into the stone courtyard. A little mumble was heard from the left. Oddly reluctant, he turned to look.

— "Holy fuck I can't do this I can't do this." He heard Miska repeat.

~~~~~

There's a feeling I get  
When I look to the west

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Miska walked alarmingly fast - *he rarely ran for/from anything, and was close to that now* - to the open window Tapani was having a smoke-break at. Tapani saw it, ducked out the way, but was pushed before he could.

The cigarette dropped in the midst of the long hairs of the carpet, diagonally. Neither one noticed; Tapani was checking on his buddy, who was leaning on the window, heavily and *indecisively* taking hurried breaths. With time, he started sounding like himself again, and Tapani took this chance to quickly get a word in:

But he couldn't.

— "Well?" Miska asked a rhetorical question.

— What?

— Well, be a smartass again. *Ha ha, Miska gets fits from disposing a body, ha ha ha, Miska wasn't such an old school guy after all, Miska's scared of washing dirty laundry.*

— You really should stop with that self-blaming and those suppositions. They're probably what got you carried away this time, too.

— Whatever.

— Well what do you think it comes from? Do you think it's the changing weathers, circumstances or what? Anxiety's very common, but all the more mysterious.

— You wanna know something? Huh, you smart-mouth fuck?

— "Well..." Tapani said, trying hard to do a delicate job in choosing the next word to come out of his mouth. "Shoot?"

— I've been having this for over a year. It's taken over me every time I do *this*... At one point last winter I couldn't get sleep for the death of me because of these. That's right, I've been a mental case for over a year! There's something for you and Samuli to gossip and laugh about to your fucking out-of-town friends.

— ...What do you honestly expect me to say to that?  
You're blaming *me* now?

— You'll figure out something smart soon, pull in all you big fancy words and philosophies. *No one* is *totally* bored of listening to you already.

—Wasn't my input exactly what you invited me here for?

— Fuck you.

Miska stood up and looked at his friend dead in the eyes.

There was a silence before the two guys, as they stood there, facing each other, *getting nowhere*.

— "You're not even trying to listen." Tapani said, as he turned away, and started walking down the hallway.

As he was walking, he heard Miska yell out:

—You're such a fucking hypocrite!

— I hope you fucking choke next time.

Tapani left, and the house was consumed by silence, only broken by the Van Morrison record - *Astral Weeks* - playing in the background.

*"To be born again...*

*...To be born again...*

*...In another world...*

*...In another world...*

*...In another time."*

Suddenly, Miska spit a mouthful in the air, letting it land wherever it may. He caught onto his breath again, and started walking back to the room he just came out of - getting back to work.

ELSEWHERE:

**Samuli Leinonen**, a 26 year-old normal-height, normal-looking young gent, opened his eyes, stared at the roof of his room for a minute, closed his eyes, opened them again and kept on blinking until his throat would clear up and he was able to call out:

— Veera! You up?

— "Hold up!" Yelled a quiet, *cute* female voice from a few rooms away.

Following the instructions of the voice, Samuli got up, slow, steady. He sat on the edge of the bed, and saw Veera coming.

— "Good morning." Said she.

— "Moorning..." Samuli muttered back at her. "My things, they ready?"

— "Yeah. It is", Veera replied.

By half-an-accident, Samuli laid his eyes on a snake-tattoo that was covering his girlfriend's arm, as she asked him:

— Listen... I know it won't help your stress out, that I'm asking about work, but... Why were you so tense yesterday? Where did you--

Samuli looked at Veera *with a sense of warning in the eyes*. Silence followed.

— "No, go ahead", said Samuli with *awfully mixed signals*, while simultaneously making quick work of putting on his shirt and jumping in his pants.

— But what you need the hammer for? Samuli, really. You gotta tell me right away if the Gym's in trouble.

— It's not. Just a precaution. You know how long it's been since there was even conflict. The guys just keep on talking about how they feel pressure brewing. I know it's nothing serious; I carry it with me mostly to satisfy them.

— Alright. Well, *remember*, you call my brother right away if you need help... of any kind. I'm serious.

— "I'll keep you up to date." Samuli assured. "You're worrying over nothing."

Side by side was the way they walked themselves to the kitchen. Samuli reached to the table, took a brown paper-bag as Veera looked at him with concern. She was quiet. He reached closer to her, landed a quick *routine*-kiss on her forehead and told her:

— I'll be back pretty early. Maybe by four, if I'm lucky.

He took a gun, laying on the table next to the bag, in his right palm. Holding the bag with the other hand, the gun with the other, he walked out the front door.

ELSEWHERE:

Tapani scrolled along Miska's stone courtyard, back in the daze. **The daze.** *That's what it's referred to, now. It's all so familiar.* Miska rushed to him from the backyard, looking at him with rehearsed bullshit remorse.

— "Don't go anywhere now! I mean it." Miska yelled out.

Tapani stopped and turned to look. He faced those remorseful eyes and felt a sense of guilty pride.

— "Sorry..." Miska *clumsily pronounced.* "You realize I was upset, right? I don't do this everyday, and the smell... Come on, help me, please?"

Tapani looked at the trees next to him, which were just passing by him slowly, just a minute ago... He couldn't let his eyes, or that thought, go.

*Why. Why the FUCK am I paying attention to those now? Why not, say, the situation instead? Tapani! Wake Up! For real. The phone.*

Tapani's phone vibrated in the front-left pocket. He reached to get it, and stopped to watch the rocks, completely forgetting Miska, who was looking at him. The colors on those stones turned... *more vivid,* as he kept looking. The sun had been coming up fast enough for the eye to notice the small differences.

— "I'm coming to Miska's. Did it happen?" Samuli's voice spoke to him from the phone.

— Huh? What you mean?

— *Miska. He told me yesterday that he might need some help early in the morning, just in case he can't keep himself under control.*

There was a silence. Tapani laid a knowing, blaming look on Miska, who was still staring.

— "Anxiety, my dick..." Tapani mumbled out to himself, too quietly for either Miska or Samuli to hear.

— *Huh?*

— "Are you coming?" Miska asked from afar.

— "*Tapani? What's going on in there?*" Samuli's voice asked through the phone.

Tapani looked at Miska in the eyes, silently, leaving both his friends without an answer. It lasted a while. Miska took a cautionary step back.

— "Yeah", Tapani said to the phone in the middle of it. "He couldn't keep himself under control. Just like he told you yesterday, but neglected to tell me, even when I was cleaning up his mess. Definitely stop by."

Tapani walked past Miska, heading to the garage. Miska was quiet and awkward. Tapani stopped at the door of the garage, turned to look at Miska with disappointment, with blame.

— You're such a fucking hypocrite.



## Chapter 3

### The Island of Hailuoto



— “Explain to me, Samuli - and please, spare me no boring detail - what was that episode with Miska about?”

Samuli was laying down on the bench at the gym, doing his reps. The bar came back up, with green discs on each end, and landed on its holder, above his head.

— What episode?

— OK, let’s go ahead and pretend there isn’t a two-ton elephant hanging on four wires from the roof.

— Huh?

— "*Tell me*", Tapani said, raising his voice, "who the fuck was the guy that's now laying sliced in Miska's house?"

— "Would you *fucking* relax with the voice?" Samuli got alarmed. "There could be--"

— *No*, there *aren't* any bugs. I scanned through the place precisely this morning. How stupid does *everybody* suddenly think I am?

— "It's not like that", Samuli said as he sat up. "I just--"

— It was a rhetoric question. Answer the fucking question.

— "Some guy he knew through his fiancée..." Said Samuli as he laid back down. "Ask him. He'll surely know."

He grabbed hold of the iron again. Tapani stood there for a couple of seconds, looking at Samuli as he put on his gloves. They slipped into his hands and Tapani was still looking. Samuli laid this grumpy look upon his friend; one that was enough of a... *enough to let me know*. Tapani walked out the door, leaving Samuli's controlled groans of hard work to echo in the room alone.

Tapani stood in the hallway, next to a set of stairs and this elevator right next to them. Lost in thought, he had stopped walking at some point. He went back to his distorted and guilty thoughts, only to have the focus broken by the door behind him. It shut. Where he was standing was a sort of a vestibule in between three hallways that went in different directions. He headed to the left, to the lounge, the center of the sports-center.

"Alright hol' up!" — he heard Samuli yell out behind him, before he could move. He stopped, turned to look, *wary of all the possible dangers of the situ-- what?*. Samuli was standing at the gym-door, a bit sweaty.

— "I didn't mean-- Just, please tell me what's it about, alright?" Tapani proposed. "Let's not start fighting now."

— "I agree totally", Samuli replied. "Okay, well... come inside first."

They walked in the gym, while Samuli was explaining:



— Miska killed some acquaintance of his fiancée's. Petra had told him she'd been raped or harassed - or some shit like that - by the guy. Some sad shit, yeah, I agree.

— "If it's true, serves the cocksucker right" Tapani said. "All rapists *should* be killed in the meanest way imaginable."

— What do you mean *if it's true*? Of course it's true, no? Miska doesn't really get riled up over...well okay, yes he does, But come on, it's not like him to *do any extras* if there isn't a solidified reason?

— Well, Miska's a known dipshit. From what I've gathered about his woman, she seems like this innocent little lady that *keeps her extra thoughts to herself* and *never has a bad thing to say at all*, but she's just the type of person that, behind the scenes, will do absolutely anything for attention. For drama to surround her. From what Miska's told me, and what I had the time to witness, she'll apply the anxiety-card, paranoia-card, fuck it, the *whole deck*, to duck anything even resembling responsibility, when something's fucked up.

— "Yeah", Samuli said, having stopped following that *oddly detailed and spicy* description.

Tapani felt disappointed, left without the big reaction his analysis *deserved*. He stared at Samuli for a while, and saw hints of him collecting one of those *what the fuck are you looking at?*-looks on his face. With an unsettling whiff of panic in his voice, Tapani switched the subject.

— "You, Miska and me are going to Hailuoto tomorrow, by the way." He *escaped*.

— Huh? You don't think we can do it anywhere else but there?

— "What the fuck did I just say?" Tapani said with out-of-leftfield anger. He quickly took off, leaving Samuli racking his brains about *what just happened? Was it something I said?*

## THE NEXT DAY:

Tapani's car stopped behind the traffic signs at Oulunsalo's ferry port. Everywhere he looked, were rocks decorating the shoreline. Just a land-road in the middle of rocks, and of course, sea... Sea was everywhere. You could drive on this road through the whole town; at every point of it, there was scenery around you. *Sure, it was more repetitive at some points, and it even felt long while driving along, but this... the end of the road. Just the sea surrounding you.* Something came over him. He stared at a wind turbine standing tall as fuck on the left. Ogling at those majestic man-made structures was all he wanted to do. *Wonder what a scary job it would've been to put that thing up... What if it breaks and someone's in--*

— "It's green!" Miska suddenly yelled in anger and frustration, interrupting the idle moment. "The goddamn light is green."

Tapani didn't even give enough of a shit to check who was yelling at him, he was too lost in thought to tell.

— **Go!**

He noticed he had stayed there anyways, quickly blamed himself, and did. The car pulled up in a parking spot on the left, next to this little house that, *is supposed to be a kiosk, I suppose.* He started paying attention again.

They all stepped out of the car. Tapani laid his eyes back on the huge, smoothly flowing wings of the turbine, that blocked the sun for half a second, one at a time. The well-orchestrated, unbreakable but still somehow alluring and beautiful movement of *those wings. What the hell is up with me today?*

— "Samuli?" Miska said.

— Right here.

— That's wonderful. A little help, maybe?

• *How quickly does thought even... ugh.*

Miska was standing next to the full trunk of the sedan. Tapani walked up with a cigarette burning in his hand.

— "Would you throw that shit away, *please?*" Miska grunted at him.

Tapani flung the thing to the water, not even trying to say anything, and just looked at Miska ordinarily, *boringly*. Miska opened up the trunk and started pulling out a litterbad the size of a human head. Tapani put his palm on Miska's hand, saying:

— I'm just thinking out loud here, but--

— "As usual", Miska interrupted him, with an eyeroll following. — Where do you think you're going with those four quarters of a human head, with witnesses all around you?

— We're *fucking* going to Hailuoto, aren't we?

— What, by foot? You walk on water now? What exactly are you *thinking!*?

— "Don't fucking get smart now, you know I'm not all there this morning! I'm sorry, okay?" Miska said, disturbed.

— "Yeah go ahead, raise your voice a little more", Samuli said sarcastically, from some steps away, where he was smoking his cigarette.

Miska started walking up. Tapani looked. While at it, he threw the bag - which he had gotten out of Miska's hand *at some point, I don't remember* - in the trunk, and shut it. *Back to what's happening*. Miska was heated. He stopped and stood in front of Samuli, as tall as he could stretch himself.

— "I'm gonna *fucking* poke your eyes out, you don't fucking behave." He barked at Samuli who was still in a little bit of amazement over what just took over that guy.

— "Yeah, right", Samuli laughingly responded, reaching to his pocket. "What do you say we start calling some people over, and see who's poking out what?"

Miska forced himself to turn around. He walked back to the trunk, looked at it, then at Tapani.

— "Now what the *fuck* do *you* think you're doing!?" He yelled.

— Seriously, Miska, stop raising your voice! We gotta--

— "Don't tell me what to do", Miska demanded.

Tapani raised up his hand, trying to get a word in, but was interrupted:

— "Don't tell me what to do."

Tapani looked away... *but couldn't keep it*. He looked and noticed Miska looking back, silent, like he was waiting for something. Tapani opened his mouth after no response for long enough:

— Well, what can I say to that...?

— Exactly. Don't say nothing.

— It was a rhetorical question

— "Retoretoreto" Miska said mockingly, but frustrated. He kicked the bumper of the car angrily, not scratching anything. "What the fuck do we do then?"

— "You're actually asking a question? Me and Samuli are gonna get a chance to talk?" Tapani said, mostly sarcastically, but with anger competing for a spot at the top of the iceberg.

— "Don't *fucking* start mouthing off at me now." Miska raved. "I'm *this close* to dropping you in the fucking jaw."

Samuli interrupted:

— We have to wait. We should be among the last bunch to enter the ferry. Then we can choose a spot in the back-end, so the wiff of the car won't travel into other people's noses. You know they like to step out of their cars to take in the sea-air.

— "I'm totally gonna do that", Tapani said.

— "Finally someone says something like it is, without all the extra shit." Miska took easy shots at Tapani.

Tapani just looked away, not saying a word.

Miska looked at him, like he was waiting for his friend to answer. He then did:

— Yeah. O.K.

FIVE MINUTES LATER:

The boys were standing in a row, leaning on the nose of Tapani's car. On the right and left of Miska, Tapani and Samuli respectively were in the closing phases of smoking their cigarettes. Standing in the middle, Miska held up the sleeve of his shirt, over his nose, looking at both his friends - who tried paying it no mind - rolling his eyes.

— "Fuck, it's here." Samuli announced, looking back. "Get in the car."

Miska did another eyeroll, and stepped in the backseat. Still standing outside, Tapani had trouble taking his eyes off the grey sky, and the loose, darker cloud hanging underneath a bigger formation. He forced himself to stop. Samuli had gotten inside in the meanwhile, too - *They'll start wondering*. After he got inside, he drove the car into *what looked like a tunnel*. It was dark for a minute, as they all fastened their seatbelts. The ferry took off almost immediately. They didn't even see the dark line in the horizon - known to locals as Hailuoto - yet.

≈≈≈≈≈

To be born again

≈≈≈≈≈

Samuli, Miska, Tapani, all stepped foot on the floor of the ferry at the same time. Tapani immediately turned his eyes back to the clouds that had been distracting him the whole time. Before he could mumble out the first word, he heard Miska announce:

—Yeah, bye boys, I'm just gonna head over there.

And he went. Samuli and Tapani just watched. Two seconds later they got bored, walked to the front and leaned on the rail, next to one another, and looked out to the sea.

— "Gimme a light", Samuli asked, having dug out another cigarette from his pocket.

Tapani did as told, placed another one of his cigarettes in between his own lips, and lit up both of them.

— "I wonder what his problem *really* is." Samuli told Tapani, while the two looked at their friend, who was getting

back into the car.

— I don't know, he's always been an A.D.D-monkey.

— Are you sure it's just that? I've met plenty of people with A.D.D in my time and they all know how to keep their mouths shut for at least a minute. For real, the whole time we were in the car, he was complaining. About everything.

— F'real, he was like a kid repeating "are we there yet?"

— Like, God, you should just go ahead and wash your dirty laundry yourself, if you're not gonna find even a word of gratitude to say. It's not like we charge him for this - *which we should*.

Tapani looked at the sky while hearing Samuli say that. He started regretting the look, got to thinking, and snapped back when he *realized everything at once*. Samuli was looking at him.

- *Why? FUCK!*

— "Just close him off from your thoughts" Tapani said, frustrated. "He's a dumbass, you know that."

Samuli nodded his head, concurring, rolling his eyes *as extra*. — "And that fucking eye-roll." Tapani said, still frustrated.

Samuli look at Tapani, unsure of what his friend meant.

— "He does it all the time", Tapani said, *fixing* what he just said. "Haven't you noticed?"

— "Mmhmm..." Samuli replied, feeling a little bit in the dark. An awkward silence fell down on 'em.

Samuli walked to the left side of the ferry. The little line in the horizon had shown up, gotten some shape around it, and he watched it unfold, focused. Tapani stayed behind, still feeling awkward, ashamed,

- *Would you just **get over there?**!*

Grinning his teeth and looking around, he followed.

After a while of just leaning to the rail in the front-end, they both looked up at the sky at the same time, then in the water, at the same time. *The passing water...* they wondered quietly, neither of them saying a word.