

Toivo KUULA

COMPLETE SOLO SONGS, VOLUME ONE

Jenni Lähtilä, soprano
Kirill Kozlovski, piano

FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING

TOIVO KUULA Complete Songs, Volume One

Three Songs, Op. 2	8:48
① No. 1 Autumn Mood (1904)	2:54
② No. 2 I stared at the fire for a long time (1907)	4:29
③ No. 3 Morning Song (1905)	1:25
④ Night (1906)	2:35
Two Songs, Op. 6 (1907)	5:17
⑤ No. 1 Summer Night in the Churchyard	2:36
⑥ No. 2 Epilogue	2:41
Two Songs, Op. 8	7:58
⑦ No. 1 The Kiss (1907–8)	4:32
⑧ No. 2 Marjatta's Song (1908)	3:24
⑨ It's only then (1899)*	0:43
⑩ Maidens Bathing in the Sea, Op. 12 (1909–10)*	8:12
Two Songs, Op. 16a	4:00
⑪ No. 1 Sinikka's Song (1910)	2:22
⑫ No. 2 Beat, Heart! (1906–09)	1:38
⑬ My Road Leads out into the World (1899)	0:57
⑭ Don't Cry, my dear young Maiden (1901)*	1:08
⑮ Hi and ho! (Folksong from South Ostrobothnia) *	1:12
Twelve Folksongs from South Ostrobothnia, Op. 17b (1908–9)**	18:23
⑯ No. 1 I will keep walking	0:51
⑰ No. 2 You mustn't tell my old mum	1:59
⑱ No. 3 Cry from the bottom of your grave	0:52
⑲ No. 4 Oh those thousands of hours	1:05

20	No. 5	My dad's cottage is low and small	1:08
21	No. 6	The lads are walking the villages	1:26
22	No. 7	There I can see the red house	0:59
23	No. 8	Heikki of Hautala house has to spend the beautiful summer	2:33
24	No. 9	Wind bent the top of the birch	2:03
25	No. 10	Blue eyes and red cheeks	2:12
26	No. 11	You're free to come and get back your ring	1:04
27	No. 12	People think I feel happy	2:11

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*FIRST RECORDINGS
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TOIVO KUULA: COMPLETE SONGS, VOLUME ONE

by Jenni Lähtilä

Toivo Kuula (1883–1918) is perhaps not generally familiar to international audiences, but he was an influential figure in Finland, where he was loved and appreciated by devotees of vocal and choral music. He was born on 7 July 1883, the son of Matti Kuula, a sergeant in the guards' regiment of the Russian Grand Duchy of Finland, a lay preacher and police officer, and pursued a career as a composer, conductor and musician instead of joining the clergy (as his father would have preferred).¹

Young Toivo's talents were recognised early on. Even before he went to school, he played the piano and pump organ, accompanying the hymns his parents' congregation was singing. As a schoolboy, he was favoured by his teachers because of his fine singing voice, but they were less impressed by his mischievous behaviour. He grew up to be a short but strong man, with a quick temper and a daredevil attitude, traits he returned to the end of his life.

He experimented with composition from an early age: his first surviving works are from 1898, when he was fifteen. In addition to the piano, he also learned to play the violin and was possessed of a sonorous baritone voice. His earliest compositions for voice – short songs that he subsequently omitted from his catalogue² – date from 1899.

Kuula began his professional studies in Helsinki in 1900, at the conservatoire that was later to become the Sibelius Academy. In 1903, he was forced to quit his studies because of a shortage of money, and he went home to his native South Ostrobothnia (Etelä-Pohjanmaa), but in 1906 he was able to return to Helsinki, where in 1907 he

¹ For the details of Kuula's biography, this essay relies heavily on Dr Juhani Koivisto's book *Tuijotin tulehen kauan – Toivo Kuulan lyhyt ja kiihkeä elämä* ('I stared into the fire for a long time – Toivo Kuula's short and intense life'), WSOY, Helsinki, 2008.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

became a student of Jean Sibelius. During those intervening years he was pressured to marry Silja Valo, who was visibly pregnant when she walked down the aisle. Their daughter, Aune, died in infancy. After a short, unhappy time together, Kuula relocated to Helsinki to continue his musical studies, and Silja Kuula moved in with his parents.

Soon after his return to Helsinki, Kuula met Alma Silventoinen, a young soprano who was also a conservatoire student. Alma was a beauty, whose company was sought by officers, students and even teachers at the conservatoire. She and Kuula fell in love, but the romance was not an easy one – Toivo was still married to Silja – but in Alma he found an understanding muse and a companion who appreciated his music. Most of the songs in this album were written for, and premiered by, her.

Kuula continued his studies in Bologna, Leipzig and Paris, and returned to northern Ostrobothnia, via Helsinki, in 1910, assuming the position of conductor of the orchestra of the Oulu Musical Society. The following year he moved back to Helsinki and was appointed assistant conductor to Robert Kajanus, a prominent figure in Finnish musical circles at the time.

In 1913 Kuula and his first wife were divorced, and he became engaged to Alma, who was now a successful concert singer. They were married in 1914 and moved to the city of Viborg in 1916, when Kuula was appointed head conductor of the Orchestra of the Viborg Friends of Music. Their daughter, Sinikka Kuula – who later became a distinguished pianist – was born in 1917.

During the early 1900s Finland was a grand duchy of the Russian Empire, in a close union with Russia proper. The turn of the twentieth century was marked by attempts to eradicate the Finnish language and culture in a process of Russification. For Finns, this policy was nothing new: from the Middle Ages until 1809, Finland had been Swedish territory, and subject to active Swedification policies.³ By the early nineteenth century Swedish was the only language of higher education in Finland, and thus the language of

³ Nils Erik Villstrand, 'Valtakunnanosa. Suurvalta ja valtakunnan hajoaminen 1560–1812' ('Reichstag. The Great Power and the Disintegration of the Empire 1560–1812'), in *Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland*, Svenska Litteratursällskapet SLS, Helsinki, 2009; English translation, *The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland*, published by SLS in 2012, pp. 54–55.

the Finnish elites.⁴ The early 1900s was marked by a struggle against Russian dominion, and by the resistance of Finnish-speaking Finns to the dominance of the Swedish language. During this time, Toivo Kuula identified as a patriot, a Nationalist and as a Fennoman – a fervent proponent of Finnish language and culture. This uncompromising political stance, combined with his idealistic character, was reflected in his untimely death.

The Russian Czar was toppled in 1917 and by the following year the Communist revolution had turned Russia into a place of terror and turmoil. During this turbulence Finland gained its independence – but not without a bloody civil war, pitting a revolutionary Communist Social Democratic Party and its Red Guards against the ‘farmers’ army’ of the democratically elected parliamentary government of the recently established Republic of Finland.

By May 1918 the Finnish government had emerged victorious. Kuula celebrated this victory on 1 May in a restaurant in his hometown of Viborg, which had been recently liberated from Communist insurgents. His party included several Jaegers: Finnish Nationalists – mainly university students – who went to Germany during the First World War to acquire military training and bring home the fight against Russia. One of the Jaegers in Kuula’s party was a pharmacist, who was able to secure sufficient amounts of strong medicinal alcohol to render them all thoroughly intoxicated. Kuula had a quarrel with some of the Jaegers: he was a proponent of the farmers’ army, had composed a *Finnish White Guard’s March* for them, and was playing that on the piano. The Jaegers were partly Swedish-speaking, they did not know Kuula and demanded that he play Sibelius’ *March of the Jaegers* instead, which Kuula found very offensive. After an exchange of words turned into a brawl, Kuula drew a knife and wounded a Jaeger. Leaving the party because of this altercation, he was shot in the head by one of the Jaegers outside the restaurant and died two weeks later on 18 May 1918.⁵ He was 34 years old.

⁴ Sirku Latomaa and Pirkko Nuolijärvi, ‘The Language Situation in Finland’, in *Language Planning*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, 2002, pp. 95–202.

⁵ In addition to Juhani Koivisto’s biography of Kuula, the incident is discussed also in Hanna Asikainen’s article ‘Säveltäjä Toivo Kuula murhattiin yli sata vuotta sitten, mutta tekijää ei koskaan saatu tilille – nyt murhamysteeri on ehkä ratkennut’ (‘The composer

Recording Toivo Kuula's Complete Songs

This release is the first half of a complete recording of Toivo Kuula's songs for solo voice and piano, ranging from 1899 to 1910, for which we have used the critical edition of his songs edited by the pianist Gustav Djupsjöbacka.⁶ There is a total of 46 songs in this critical edition, with alternative versions of three of them. For those we have used the versions the composer most probably intended to be final. There are 44 songs in our two volumes of Kuula's complete songs: we have omitted three that are clearly marked in the critical edition, based on archival sources, as songs intended for community singing.⁷ For one of those, 'Pesäänsä suojeleva lintu' ('The Bird protecting its Nest'), Op. 29a, No. 2 (to be included on Volume Two), we used a version found in the Helsinki University Library⁸ that can be interpreted as a version for solo voice. The sheet music was published online in 2006 by the Toivo Kuula Society.⁹ In addition to the music published in the critical edition of the songs, we have recorded a vocalise, *Vokaliisi (Mélodie lugubre)*, Op. 17a, No. 8 (Volume Two), which Kuula originally wrote for his wife Alma to help her strengthen her voice and balance its registers. The vocalise was published not as a solo song but as a piece for violin and cello (Op. 17c, No. 2),¹⁰ which is probably why it was excluded from the critical edition. We are grateful to the chairman of the Toivo Kuula Society, Tero Tommila, and its secretary, Markku Marttinen (the composer's grandson), for sending us the sheet music for *Vokaliisi (Mélodie lugubre)*.

Seven of the songs on these two volumes have not been recorded before. *Merenkylpijäneidot* ('Maidens Bathing in the Sea'), Op. 12 [10], and *Impi ja pajarin poika* ('The Girl and the Son of a Boyar'), Op. 18 (on Volume Two), were recorded previously as songs with orchestra rather than with piano accompaniment. The solo version of

Toivo Kuula was murdered over a hundred years ago, but the perpetrator was never brought to account – now the murder mystery may have been solved'), posted on 25 October 2022: <https://yle.fi/aihe/a/20-10003568>, accessed on 1 November 2023.

⁶ Gustav Djupsjöbacka (ed.), Preface, *Toivo Kuula – Kootut yksinlaulut* ('Collected Solo Songs'), Fennica Gehrman, Helsinki, 2008, p. 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 232–33.

⁸ Helsinki University Library archives C3b, Sinikka Kuula-Marttinen's collection.

⁹ Toivo Kuula Society website: [http://kuula-seura.fi/nuotit/cke2c5/lintu\(lied\).pdf](http://kuula-seura.fi/nuotit/cke2c5/lintu(lied).pdf), accessed on 4 November 2023.

¹⁰ Toivo Kuula Society webpage: <http://kuula-seura.fi/nuotit/cke1b3/1b3.html>, accessed on 4 November 2023.

Pesäänsä suojeleva lintu ('The Bird protecting its Nest') Op. 29a, No. 2 (on Volume Two), had not been recorded before, nor had the *Vokaliisi (Mélodie lugubre)* for voice and piano (on Volume Two). Three of the early songs without opus numbers, *Elä itke impeni nuori* ('Don't cry, my dear young Maiden') [14], *Kas silloin vaan* ('It's only then') [9] and *Hei ja hei!* ('Hi and ho!') [15], are also new to the microphone. They were first published in Gustav Djupsjöbacka's critical edition in 2008.¹¹ All the songs are recorded in the original key. They are not presented in chronological order on these two albums, although below they are discussed in the order in which they were composed.

The Songs

Toivo Kuula began composing at the age of fifteen, as a schoolboy in Vaasa. His first songs, *Kas silloin vaan*, to a text by Larin-Kyösti (Karl Gustaf Larson), and *Ut min väg i världens går* ('My Road Leads out into the World') [13], setting words by an anonymous poet, were written in 1899 when he was sixteen,¹² and *Elä itke impeni nuori*, to a text by Eino Leino, was composed in 1901. That Kuula was planning to publish his earliest songs as a cycle is evident in a transcript which can be seen in the Helsinki University library: in addition to these three songs, he had planned to compose a fourth, *Miksi riennän* ('Why Am I Rushing'), of which only eight bars have survived.¹³ The early songs are on a rather small scale, simple and folksong-like, but there are some original features in them which he used in his later works, such as the use of the Dorian mode and textual themes of summer and autumn in *Elä itke impeni nuori* (as Juhani Koivisto points out in his as yet unpublished study of Kuula's solo songs¹⁴). The Swedish Romantic song *Ut min väg i världens går*, written to a poem by an unknown Swedish poet, is an interesting exception in Kuula's works, since he was a zealous Finnoman: he used mostly Finnish texts in his works and preferred to use Finnish performance directions rather than Italian.

¹¹ Djupsjöbacka, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. 4.

¹² Koivisto, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹³ Djupsjöbacka, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

¹⁴ Juhani Koivisto, *Sylkytys sydänalassa – Sanan, sävelen ja elämän kohtaaminen Toivo Kuulan lauluissa* ('The Throbbing in the Chest – The Encounter of Poetry, Music and Life in Toivo Kuula's Solo Songs'), unpublished text, 2024.

He was one of the trailblazing song-composers to set Finnish poems correctly, adapting to the rhythm of the language so that the sung words sound natural and contain no incorrect stresses. Since Finnish belongs to the Finno-Ugric group of languages, which have no relationship with most other European languages, setting it to music is very different from setting other languages. In Finnish, the stress of a word is without exception on the first syllable, be it long or short. In long words (which are plentiful in Finnish) there are also secondary stresses, that is, syllables that are not completely unstressed, but still weaker than the primary stress. Double vowels and consonants have specific meanings and must be pronounced as they are written, and there is also a consideration known as vowel harmony, which restricts the co-occurrence in a word of vowels belonging to different articulatory subgroups.¹⁵ The early decades of the composition of Finnish song in the late 1800s show that metres adapted straight from European poetry, such as the iamb, and the manner in which melodies were usually composed, did not really suit the Finnish language at all: composers stretched short syllables and cropped long ones to make the poem fit the melody. Kuula did the opposite: he wanted to be very precise in matching the music to the words. As Koivisto indicates, Kuula 'mastered the metrics of the Finnish language and never did violent deeds to it'.¹⁶

Kuula did not compose cycles of songs that were thematically linked or connected through a narrative; instead, he grouped individual songs and had them published together under a single opus number. He used texts by his contemporaries; the poets most important to him were Eino Leino (ten of the songs on these two releases are set to his poetry) and V. A. Koskenniemi (on whose poetry six songs on these two albums are based). In addition to the solo songs, Kuula wrote many choral works to texts by these two poets. Leino (1878–1926) was not only a journalist but also a pioneer of Finnish poetry, writing about modern subjects in the style of traditional folk-poems.

¹⁵ In Finnish, the vowels are divided in two main groups: back vowels A, O and U, and front vowels Y, Ä and Ö. In general, within a word you will only find vowels from one group or from the other group, since the two groups of vowels don't normally mix. The neutral vowels E and I can be combined with both main groups. Cf. Auli Hakulinen *et al.*, *Iso suomen kielioppi* ('The Great Book of Descriptive Grammar of Finnish'), SKS:n toimituksia 950, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki, 2004, pp. 37–69.

¹⁶ Koivisto, 2024.

His poetry is much loved even today, and he is regarded as a national poet. Veikko Antero Koskenniemi (1885–1962) was a professor of literature, a university rector and a member of the Finnish Academy, known for his poems, essays and travel books. His poems were often patriotic and included symbolist themes of death and the search for the truth. Kuula wrote music to accompany poems that touched him personally; many of his songs express strong emotions about the nature of the Finns and the changing seasons.

The first of Kuula's mature songs, *Syystunnelma* ('Autumn Mood'), Op. 2, No. 1 [1], setting a poem by Eino Leino, was composed in 1904 after the penniless Kuula returned to Vaasa following his first, unsuccessful period of study. His compositional trademarks are already clearly present: the Dorian mode, and the dominant-seventh chord with a lowered fifth, which many Finnish musicians and researchers now call 'the Kuula chord'.¹⁷ In his unpublished text, Koivisto writes that the Kuula chord is connected to themes like 'cold, darkness, fog, unhappiness and death'.¹⁸ In Kuula's later works, this signature chord developed slightly differently as his treatment of harmony became more Impressionist. 'Autumn Mood' opens with a rather ominous low *tremolo* in the piano, and the music paints, in strong strokes, a mood devoid of comfort. The poet has been abandoned by his beloved, and summer as the metaphor for a love-affair is gone. As the last reminder of better times, or perhaps as a symbol of hope, he sees a flower in winter, which withers as the song progresses, and, as the song ends, he covers it with snow: all hope is gone. In Kuula's songs there is usually a connection to his own life. The hopelessness in 'Autumn Mood' may refer to his crushed dreams of becoming a genuine composer (or so it seemed at the time).

Aamulaulu ('Morning Song'), Op. 2, No. 3 [3], one of Kuula's most popular songs, was written in Vaasa in the spring of 1905, following his marriage to his pregnant fiancée, Silja. It is a catchy, folk-like piece in an ABA form with a simple, yet inventive, piano part. The theme in Leino's poem is nature, and morning as a metaphor for youth. In the middle part, the speaker calms his heart and tells himself to carry on dreaming young

¹⁷ Cf., for example, Koivisto, 2008, p. 53.

¹⁸ Koivisto, 2024.

dreams, but in the last stanza it becomes obvious that it is not possible to stop young people from falling in love. This song was the first one Kuula introduced to his teachers when he returned to the conservatoire, and it received favourable reviews in the press,¹⁹ which he must have found encouraging.

The next song among his early works – composed before he met his muse, the soprano Alma Silventoinen – is the gloomy *Yö* ('Night') [4], composed in 1906 for a low male voice. For some reason, the composer did not include this song in his opus catalogue, and it was published only posthumously as his Op. 22, together with two violin pieces written in 1919.²⁰ According to his letters, Kuula was feeling quite gloomy in 1906, as his marriage with Silja Kuula was falling apart.²¹ That may be the reason for his attraction to this particular poem, written in the form of a sonnet. In Leino's text, the speaker, sitting alone at dusk, suddenly sees a flickering vision of a familiar character. The song is written for the most part in quite a low register for both voice and piano, and, although it is common practice to transpose songs, this one is practically never sung in a higher key – or by women. It opens with low *una corda* chords separated by long rests. The piano part grows denser and the vocal line climbs higher as the tension rises, into a feverish outburst, before calming down again at the very end.

In 1906, Kuula also created a version for solo voice and piano of his own choral song *Lyö, sydän!* ('Beat, Heart!'), Op. 16a, No. 2 [12], which he had composed in Vaasa in 1904 to a poem by Antti Rytkönen. The text repeats the word 'lyö!' eleven times in this relatively short song in which there are only 38 words in total. The piano part is also very repetitious. The performance directions are *kaameasti* ('in a ghastly manner'). This song is indeed ghastly: in the text, the speaker urges his heart to beat like a wave against a cliff, because life ends soon and then there is nothing ahead but eternal night. Here Kuula once again uses his signature chord when the text mentions death.²² The song was later added to Op. 16a as a pairing for *Sinikan laulu* ('Sinikka's Song').

¹⁹ Koivisto, 2024.

²⁰ Djupsjöbacka, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

²¹ Koivisto, 2008, pp. 79–80

²² Koivisto, 2024.

Tuijotin tulehen kauan ('I stared at the fire for a long time'), Op. 2, No. 2 [2], is probably Kuula's most cherished song, and one of the most famous Finnish vocal works ever written. It is the first one he wrote for Alma Silventoinen. In the archaic poem, Leino uses the Kalevala metre,²³ a trochaic tetrameter with alliteration and parallelism, which means that ideas are presented on one line and repeated with synonyms on the next. He also uses a lot of Kalevalaic vocabulary and allusions in the poem, which makes it rather difficult for even an average Finn of the 2020s to understand, let alone translate. It opens with a simple motif of two chords, in a stagnant atmosphere, where the speaker sits quietly by the fire and begins to remember his past relationship. Kuula writes the tonic at the beginning of the bar, and a gently dissonant chord on the unstressed part, and this rocking movement continues for sixteen bars. With vivid memories appearing in the text, the piano texture becomes more animated. In the poem, the happier days of the past are associated with summer, and the present moment is clearly winter, since the speaker is burning a fire to heat up his house.²⁴ Apparently the speaker has been away for a while, and when he returns, he sees his beloved maiden preparing for her wedding – but she has been betrothed to another man, a noble and valiant man who is able to ski through the Hiisi's, or the devil's, forest, the land of the dead, like the Kalevalaic hero Lemminkäinen. As the reminiscence fades at the end of the song, the music returns to the stillness of the beginning. This song forms a complete scene, with varying emotions and a clear musical structure.

Kuula composed *Kesäyö kirkkomaalla* ('Summer Night in the Churchyard'), Op. 6, No. 1 [5], in November 1907 for Alma to perform in her singing exam. The text by Koskenniemi is yet another example of Kuula's fondness for romanticising death, and his letters to Alma written around the same time give the same impression: both he and Alma were in a desperate situation, since they could not see a future for their

²³ *The Kalevala* is a nineteenth-century work of epic poetry compiled by Elias Lönnrot (1802–84) from Karelian and Finnish oral folklore and mythology. For Finnish intellectuals of the time, the Kalevala was a symbol of the Finnish nation, the Finnish language and Finnish culture, a foundation on which to build the Finnish national identity.

²⁴ Koivisto, 2024.

relationship, Kuula being still married to his first wife.²⁵ In the song, the speaker is walking in a peaceful graveyard on a light Nordic summer night and suddenly has the feeling that someone has just passed by. It could be Death, as Koivisto interprets it,²⁶ or God, or perhaps even Christ, since the speaker expects to be taken to a better world by whomever it is. At the beginning there is a hauntingly beautiful, cello-like melody in the left hand of the piano part. When the vocal line begins, the piano plays sighing syncopated chords which then evolve to arpeggiated triplets. When the poem mentions the mystical passer-by, the alluring piano melody from the introduction returns in unison with the singing voice, towards the culmination and peaceful ending of the song. This beautiful piece is often performed in church concerts, even though it is not religious *per se*.

Epilogi ('Epilogue'), Op. 6, No. 2 [6], is paired with *Kesäyö kirkkomaalla* under the same opus number, and it also discusses death. The poems are from the same collection, *Runoja – Lakeus* ('Poems – The Expanse'; 1906), by Koskenniemi. Here the poem examines how, in the autumn of life, one can simply look back peacefully at the pleasures and pains that have already passed, when crops were reaped from the fields, and it's getting colder and colder – but there is still a cycle of life, reincarnation, a new spring coming after the winter: eternal youth. Musically, there is a steady heartbeat in the bass line of the piano part, with rolling arpeggiated chords above it. The song is one long *crescendo* with a few more tranquil places, ending with a triple *fff* at the end.

In *Suutelo* ('The Kiss'), Op. 8, No. 1 [7], Kuula continues his journey through songs about death, this time with a poem by Aarni Kouta. Koivisto suggests²⁷ that this predilection has to do with the fact that Kuula, like many of his contemporaries, was interested in Nietzsche's philosophy and, later, in Theosophy, an ideology based on ideas about karma, rebirth and an absolute divinity underpinning everything. The idea of reincarnation is present in this poem, where the white lilies wait impatiently for the cold autumn night to give them a kiss of death, so that they can be born again in the spring.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Kuula composed the dramatic ending of the song in April 1908 - 'Your soul was the white lily blossom, I was the night' - and added the first half the following summer. There is a double bar-line in between the two halves. This song has an obvious connection to his relationship with Alma: the composer sees himself giving a kiss of death to his beloved's dreams, since they could not truly be together or have a physical relationship because he was married. According to Alma's diary, they kissed for the first time in April 1908, and just a few days later she received the latter part of this song.²⁸

The other song in this opus, *Marjatta laulu* ('Marjatta's Song'), Op. 8, No. 2 [8], was composed in 1908 to another poem by Eino Leino. It is closely associated with folklore about Marjatta, a lowly maiden who is the Kalevalaic equivalent of the Virgin Mary. In the Kalevala, Marjatta falls pregnant by eating a lingonberry and gives birth to a baby boy all alone in the middle of the woods, in a stable warmed only by animals (she is denied the use of a sauna, where Finns traditionally give birth). Leino's poem is a retelling of this folktale, and he uses the same archaic Kalevala style here as in 'I stared at the fire for a long time'. Kuula shortened Leino's poem, omitting the reference to the warmth of the animals and a miraculous star shining above. It strikes me that fading Marjatta - or the Virgin Mary - into the background makes the song more universal, transforming it into the lullaby of a desperate, poor and disdained woman. In Finland there is a long tradition of singing 'lullabies of death' because until the twentieth century infant mortality was staggeringly high. In the Kalevala, there is an eponymous lullaby of death, 'Tuuti lasta Tuonelahan, lasta lautojen sylihin, alla nurmen nukkumahan, maan alla makoamahan' ('Rock my child to the underworld, to be held by wooden boards, to sleep under the green, to lie underground'), which Kuula wrote as a song for chorus. Sleep and death were regarded as complementary; for those in dire poverty, it was even seen as a better option for a child to die young, before experiencing life's hardships. Kuula had lost four of his siblings at a very young age,²⁹ and his daughter Aune from

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Koivisto, 2008, p. 16.

his first marriage lived for only ten weeks,³⁰ and so the topic must have been painfully familiar to him.

Merenkylpijäineidot ('Maidens Bathing in the Sea'), Op. 12 [10], is a 'legend' written in Paris, first for soprano and piano in 1909, and for soprano and orchestra a year later. Once again Kuula used a poem by Eino Leino, this time from the epic collection of poems *Helkavirsiä* ('Whitsongs'), considered his *magnum opus*. Here Leino uses his Kalevalaic poetic language to merge legends and myths with themes of modern human life. In 'Maidens Bathing in the Sea' the maidens of Hiisi (a mythical giant; sometimes the word 'Hiisi' even refers to the devil) are creatures who appear as birds during the day but as humans at night. The girls go bathing in the sea, leaving their plumage on the shore. There, a happy-go-lucky fowler called Lippo (the Finnish form of Philip) finds them and steals one of the feathered suits, demanding a kiss as compensation for returning it. As in many ballads or legends, one does not get a kiss from a supernatural creature without severe consequences. The two characters of the ballad bargain for a long time about the kiss: the girl knows her kiss is lethal and warns him several times, but as day is breaking, she has no other choice than to kiss the man with her hard beak to get her wings back. In the colourful orchestration, one can hear the influence of Debussy and Dukas.³¹ The piano part is demanding, reflecting all the colours of the orchestration, ranging from rather Sibelian *Luonnotar*-style music of mythical eternity to the witty playfulness of the happy fowler. Kuula's grand-scale orchestral songs suggest he might have become a significant operatic composer and music dramatist had he lived longer.

Sinikan laulu ('Sinikka's Song'), Op. 16a, No. 1 [11], was composed in Paris in 1910 to another text by Leino, originally from a play called *Lalli*,³² which Kuula saw at the Finnish National Theatre in March 1908; he was very impressed by its National Romantic

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

³² Eino Leino's play is based on the legend of Saint Henry, who was proactive in the first Swedish crusade to Finland around year 1150. Henry, the bishop of Uppsala, was allegedly killed by a Finnish peasant called Lalli on the ice of Lake Köyliö, although there are no actual historical sources supporting the folklore as a fact. During the Finnish National Romantic era, Lalli was considered a heroic character for opposing Swedish colonialism.

Finnish atmosphere.³³ In the song, the character Sinikka is waiting for her fiancé Inko and is unsure of his destiny. She sings about seeing two boats racing, the boat of Death and the boat of Dreams, and the grim boat seems always to be in the lead, suggesting that the threat of death is constantly present. The melody has a likeness to Ostrobothnian folksong, the Dorian scale is heard and there is a hint of the new Parisian influence in the texture of the piano part.³⁴ In 1917, Alma and Toivo Kuula named their daughter Sinikka – Eino Leino fabricated the name for the character in his play from the Finnish word ‘sininen’ (‘blue’), and the name has been quite popular ever since.

Ostrobothnian Folksongs

The series of *Twelve Folksongs from South Ostrobothnia*, Op. 17b, is a reflection of Kuula’s nationalism and the nationalistic project that attempted to define and refine Finnish culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Following the example of Elias Lönnrot (1802–84), who had in the early nineteenth century travelled in Karelia collecting the poems from which he edited the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, many Finnish researchers and artists had spent summers collecting folklore, poems and songs. The experience was typically comprehensive: the collector, dressed in clothing worn by the local populace, carried his belongings in a backpack – most iconically in a *kontti*, a traditional case woven from long and narrow strips of birchbark – and walked from village to village, interviewing the locals.

Ostrobothnian folklore reflects its regional history. During the Great Northern War (1700–21) Finland was occupied by Russian troops for a period known as The Great Wrath. Finland as a whole, and especially Ostrobothnia, was ravaged in a series of atrocities that a modern observer would label genocide. The number of victims of these atrocities has not been precisely verified, but recent research suggests a casualty count of 20,000 from a population of roughly 400,000 people. Moreover, there were possibly 30,000 prisoners sold into slavery – in fact, the proportion of Finns taken into Russian captivity during The Great Wrath is higher than the number of people taken

³³ Koivisto, 2024.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

into slavery from any African country. Like so many other people living close to Russia, Ostrobothnians learned to suspect, hate and fear all things Russian.

After The Great Wrath, the wealth accumulated by the region grew steadily, leading to population growth and social stagnation. The farming practices required a degree of communal discipline and social cohesion, and so land-owning farmers, often under the leadership of the local vicar, developed ever-stricter regulations for acceptable social conduct, encompassing not only farming practices but also imposing rules for interaction between young men and women. After 1770 the clergy in the diocese of Ostrobothnia prevailed upon the local governor to grant legal status to these regulations. Subsequently, mere bad behaviour – and, indeed, normal interaction between the sexes – was often labelled criminal.

The Russian conquest of Finland in 1809 undermined the legitimacy of government and its laws and officials in the eyes of the local population, who, through oral tradition, had learned about the atrocities of The Great Wrath. Even today, tales of terror and death are repeated in families who adhere to tradition.

By the late nineteenth century there was a growing population of young men whose prospects were limited and whose freedom was restricted. Although many of them emigrated to the United States, others chose to rebel against the regulations they considered unfair, and the authorities whose legitimacy they suspected. *Häjyt* (literally ‘the mean ones’) or *puukkojunkkarit* (‘young men with *puukko*³⁵ knives’) were gangs of young men who embarked on an illegal lifestyle involving fast horses, personal honour requiring violence to uphold it – and the ubiquitous *puukko* knife. These outlaws acquired a legendary reputation, were both feared and admired, and were the subject of many romantic tales.

The folksongs collected by Toivo Kuula relate a few of these tales. He arranged a cycle of twelve Ostrobothnian folksongs in Bologna³⁶ and Paris³⁷ in 1908–9. These songs

³⁵ The *puukko* is a small traditional Finnish general-purpose belt knife with a single curved cutting edge, a solid hidden tang and a flat spine.

³⁶ Koivisto, 2008, p. 229.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

are popular among young singers, since the simple folk-melodies are not too difficult for beginners, and the colourful piano parts in several of the songs are so impressive and elaborate, even virtuosic, that it is possible to get a full musical experience from these simple folksongs. Some Finnish singers with Ostrobothnian roots spice up these songs by singing in the local dialect, and these variants can be heard in many concerts and recordings. Since I am a Finn of a Karelian-Tavastian³⁸ heritage, I have chosen to adhere to the lyrics in the form in which Kuula wrote them down when collecting the folksongs. There are also some repeats that singers traditionally include, but which are not written in Kuula's arrangements; on this recording, we perform the songs as Kuula wrote them.

The first of these songs, 'Niin kauan minä tramppaan' ('I will keep walking') [16], is a defiant cry of independence. The narrator describes how he roams the villages at will, making love with whom he pleases, his independence manifested in his horse and decorated carriage. The singer's folk-tune is accompanied by a march-like, even initially percussive, piano.

'Eikä sitä sanaa sanoa saisi' ('You mustn't tell my old mum') [17] is the lament of a person ardently in love and sick of jealousy, because his or her loved one is frivolously spending too much time out in the world. The narrator cautions against telling the loved one's old mother that her child is the captive of unhappy love. As nouns and pronouns have no gender in Finnish, it is not revealed whether the speaker is lamenting the behaviour of a girlfriend or a boyfriend.

'Huuda hautas pohjasta' ('Cry from the bottom of your grave') [18] is a short piece addressing a friend – presumably of the opposite sex – who is lying dead in the grave, while still being close to the narrator's heart.

The fourth song, 'Voi niitä tuntia tuhansia' ('Oh those thousands of hours') [19], is a simple love-song recalling the thousands of hours the narrator has lain beside his or her loved one, and the amorous words that were spoken during those times.

'Pappani maja on matala ja pieni' ('My dad's cottage is low and small') [20], the fifth song, is another cry of defiance. The narrator tells of his origins by describing his father's

³⁸ Karelia (Karjala) and Tavastia (Häme) are Finnish regions, like Ostrobothnia (Pohjanmaa), but to the south.

humble dwelling, which was so small and so low that no stairs were needed, and, as a result, his inheritance is so meagre that a foal could easily draw it in a cart. The only thing the narrator has in abundance is oppressors – and he does not feel the need to explain himself to the girls of his village.

‘Pojjat ne kulkee kyliä’ (‘The lads are walking the villages’) [21] is a shout of bravado, where the boys are roaming the villages, making the roadsides resound, while seven girls are crying, according to the narrator, who just laughs.

In ‘Tuoltapa näkyy se punanen talo’ (‘There I can see the red house’) [22] the narrator (explicitly revealed to be a girl) sings about her increasing happiness, playing with words and telling us how she recalls her old beau when she spends time with her new fiancé, and vice versa – and her boyfriends must all be cute and handsome!

The eighth song, ‘Hautalan Heikki se kaunihiin kesän’ (‘Heikki of Hautala house has to spend the beautiful summer’) [23], tells the story of Heikki of Hautala house, who is forced to spend the beautiful summer in a prison, while grass and leaves are green, and his bride-to-be is young. Heikki promises the girl he will visit her when he escapes from prison, and the girl, who is described as young and childish, awaits. At the end of the song, it is revealed that Heikki perished in the prison when autumn came. Kuula colours the third verse of the song with an impressive and simple device in the piano part – a pedal point of a fifth in the bass register, as if lamenting the wretched life of the protagonist.

‘Tuuli se taivutti koivun larvan’ (‘Wind bent the top of the birch’) [24] contrasts the imagery of nature – birch trees bending in the wind, while the sea is raised in waves – with the monotony of prison life. The final stanza shows the narrator transferred from one prison to another, in shackles. Kuula’s treatment of piano texture is highly effective: one can almost hear the trees and the waves in the rolling sextuplets.

The tenth song, ‘Siniset silmät ja punaset posket’ (‘Blue eyes and red cheeks’) [25], tells a fragmentary story about Jukka of Ketola. Jukka is a farmhand, fair-looking with red cheeks and blue eyes, liked by many girls. Next, the listener is told how Maija of Ylinen has a premonition, a dream where Jukka tells her not to mourn his passing. The final stanza reveals that his namesake, Jukka of Melntoo, has a *puukko* knife, sharp as an arrow,

before revealing quite laconically that Jukka of Ketola died behind the stables of Martti of Härsilä.

‘Hae pois vaan sormukses’ (‘You’re free to come and get back your ring’) [26] is a message to a loved one to come and retrieve a ring from the narrator. Rather enigmatically, the narrator mentions marble floors and mirrored doors, before telling his or her former lover that the ring has started to rust, and the narrator’s heart is starting to incline towards others.

In the twelfth and last song of the cycle, ‘Luullahan jotta on lysti olla’ (‘People think I feel happy’) [27], the narrator explains why she is singing. People tend to think she sings because she is having fun – but no, she sings to push smaller sorrows to the bottom of her heart.

In addition to the cycle of twelve folksongs, Kuula arranged one more folksong, *Hei ja hei!* (*Eteläpohjalainen kansanlaulu*) (‘Hi and ho! (Folksong from South Ostrobothnia)’) [15]. The year of the arrangement is not known. Here, the narrator is a girl who has been disappointed in love and has decided to leave the village for good. Why this song did not make it into the collection of Ostrobothnian folksongs is not known.

Jenni Lättilä earned two masters' degrees at the Sibelius Academy, one from the department of Church Music and another from that of Vocal Music and Opera. She received her doctorate in 2017, having studied the young dramatic soprano voice as the vehicle of Wagnerian music (in a recital series), as well as 'opera as emotional labour' (in a written thesis). Jenni Lättilä has been a prize-winner in several national and international vocal competitions. Her dramatic soprano instrument is particularly suited for the major female roles in Verdi's and Wagner's operas; indeed, in 2010 her debut role as an opera singer was as Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth*. In 2011 she made her debut at the Finnish National Opera (FNO), singing three roles in Wagner's *Ring*; she has been a regular guest soloist at the FNO since then. She is also a sought-after orchestral soloist and performs regularly as a Lied recitalist; her recording of Wagner's complete Lieder with the pianist Kirill Kozlovski was published in 2016, and their Lieder duo has since appeared on a 2017 recording from Nova Records of newly discovered songs by the Finnish composer Yrjö Kilpinen.



A versatile musician, Jenni Lättilä is renowned as a performer of contemporary music. She has also worked as church musician, voice pedagogue and as the conductor of a chamber orchestra and a number of choirs. Her scholarly interests as a post-doctoral researcher encompass aspects of classical singing as a profession rather than art.

Jenni Lättilä has served as the head of the Vocal Music department and lecturer of vocal arts at the Sibelius Academy since 2020. In January 2024, she was appointed the Academy Vice Dean for Artistic Activities.

Kirill Kozlovski is a Finnish-Belarusian pianist, harpsichordist and researcher. He holds a doctoral degree from the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki for his research into the music of Dmitri Shostakovich (2017). His present research interests include Soviet music and cultural history, as well as performance practices within the Russian piano school. As a performing artist he aims at versatility and careful balance between different styles and epochs. His repertoire encompasses music from the late Renaissance to contemporary composers, although Soviet music occupies a special position. Kirill Kozlovski is a devoted collaborative pianist with a special affinity for vocal chamber music. His previous recordings include the complete songs by Richard Wagner with Jenni Lähtilä and the baritone Tommi Hakala (Siba Records), a solo piano album, *Shostakovich in Context*, combining preludes and fugues by Dmitri Shostakovich with Finnish contemporary music (Pilfink Records), and a programme of piano music by Yuri Shaporin for Toccata Classics (TOCC 0621).



Texts and Translations

1 Syystunnelma, Op. 2, No. 1 (1904)

Eino Leino

Teit oikein ystävä aino,
kun luotani läksit pois,
sun rintasi nuori ja lämmin
mun rinnalla jäätynyt ois.

Kas maantiellä kalpea kukka
lumipälvestä nostavi pään,
mitä vuottelet kukkani vielä,
on aika jo painua pään.

Tuhat aatosta sieluni tunsi,
sen vaan minä muistaa voin:
oli tielläni kuihtunut kukka,
ja sen peitoksi lunta ma loin.

2 Tuijotin tulehen kauan, Op. 2, No. 2 (1907)

Eino Leino

Tuijotin tulehen kauan,
liikuttelin lieden puita,
ajattelin armastani,
muistin mustakulmaistani.
Hiilet hehkui, kuvat kulki,
ajat armahat samosi.

Liiteli suviset linnut,
keikkuivat kesäiset päivät,
poski hehkui, suu hymysi,
silmät muita muistutteli.

Autumn Mood

*You did the right thing, my only friend,
when you left me,
your young and warm heart
would have frozen by my side.*

*See, on the verge of the road, a pale flower
lifts its head from a patch of snow.
What are you still waiting for, my flower,
it is already time to bow your head.*

*My soul knew and felt a thousand thoughts,
but I remember only one:
there was a withered flower by my path,
and I covered it with snow.*

I stared at the fire for a long time

*I stared at the fire for a long time
moving about the firewood in the stove,
thinking about my beloved,
remembering the dark-browed one.
The cinders were glowing, the reminiscences
returned, the better times came back to me.*

*The south birds soared,
the summer days went dancing by,
cheeks glowing, lips smiling,
eyes suggesting further things.*

Vierin maita, vierin soita,
vierin suuria saloja.

Salossa savu sininen,
savun alla armas mökki,
mökissä ihana impi
kultakangasta kutovi,
hellystä helskityväi.

Kelle kangas kultaloimi?
– Häiksi metsän morsioille.
Kelle neiti näätärinta?
– Hiihtäjälle Hiiden korven.

Ei hyvä hylätyn kauan
liikutella lieden puita.
Vesi silmihin tulevi,
pää käsihin tuiskahtavi,
kurkussa korina käypi,
sylkytys sydänelässä.

3 **Aamulaulu, Op. 2, No. 3** (1905)
Eino Leino

Kaiu, kaiu lauluni,
kaiu korkealle!
Aamu koittaa, aalto käy
jo rannan raidan alle.

*I roam the uplands, I roam the wetlands,
I roam the great forests.*

*In the forest I see blue smoke,
beneath the smoke the beloved cabin,
in the cabin the sweet maiden
weaving a golden fabric,
rattling a loom, making a fabric adorned with
pearls.*

*To whom is intended the fabric with the golden
warp?
– For the wedding of the forest bride.
To whom is intended the maiden, golden and
white like the breast of a marten?
– To him who skis through the Hiisi forest.*

*It is no good for the abandoned one to linger
moving the embers about in the stove.
Tears arise in the eyes,
head falls into the hands,
there is a rattle in the throat,
the heart starts throbbing in the chest.*

Morning Song

*Resound, my song,
resound high!
Morning comes, waves are already rippling
under the willow on the shore.*

Nuku, nuori sydämein,
nuku nuorta unta!
Katso, kuinka havajaa
koko luomakunta!

Lennä, lennä lempeni,
lennä yli vuorten!
Ei ne estä vuorekkaan
lempimistä nuorten.

4 *Yö* (1906)¹

Eino Leino

Yö saapuu. Päivä on poissa,
hämy silmiä hämmentää.
Jo kaukana korven soissa
tulet virvojen viriää.
Ypöyksin istun ma koissa,
ei armasta ystävää,
mutta oudoissa unelmoissa
mun henkeni heläjää.
Ken siellä? Ken lehdossa läikkyy?
Kuka huntua huiskuttaa?
Kuva valkea vierii ja väikkyy,
tutut piirtehet pilkoittaa.
Mun aatteeni seisoo ja säikkyy,
sumu silmiä sumentaa.

*Sleep, my young heart,
dream young dreams!
Look, how the whole creation
is gently sougning!*

*Fly, fly my love,
fly over the mountains!
Even the mountains cannot stop
the young from loving each other.*

Night

*Night is falling. The day is gone,
twilight distracts my eyes.
In the deep forest mires
will-o'-the-wisps are glowing.
All alone I sit at home,
with no beloved or friends around,
but my soul is resounding
in the strangest dreams.
Who's there? Who is gleaming in the grove?
Who is it, whisking a veil?
A light image moves about and glistens,
I see a glimpse of familiar features.
My thoughts stand still, frightened,
the haze is blurring my eyes.*

¹ Kuula omitted *Yö* from his original opus listing, and the critical edition by Gustav Djupsjöbacka lists the song without an opus number. It was published posthumously, in Op. 22, as the third item after two violin pieces, *Chanson sans paroles* and *Suru*.

5 Kesäyö kirkkomaalla, Op. 6, No. 1 (1907)

V. A. Koskenniemi

Omaa kirkkauttansa kummeksuun
kesäyöhyt maille laskeuupi.
Syviin aatoksiinsa unehtuun
puiset ristit yössä uneksuupi.

Elon onni, lempi, ystävyys,
soi tänne kuin kaiku laulun lauhan.
Kaartuu ikihyvä ijäisyys
yli sydämeni suuren rauhan.

Täällä jossain lähelläni lienet
– tunnen ohitse sun kulkeneesi –
sä ken kerran uneksijan vienet
rauhan kotiin, pyhään kirkkauteesi.
Sä sinne uneksijan vienet.

6 Epilogi, Op. 6, No. 2 (1907)

V. A. Koskenniemi

Katso, sun rintasi rauhassa mennehet kevähät
nukkuu,
katso, sun rakkahat riemus ja tuskas on poissa.
Viileä onni sun ohimoillasi asuu, syysöiden onni.

Katso, on ylitse suvisten kenttäis kuolema
käynyt.
Poissa on valoisat yöt ja tähkät on viikate vienyt.
Ylitse aavojen kenttäin katsovat illoin viluilset
tähdet

Summer Night in the Churchyard

*Amazed by its own brightness,
summer night is falling.
Forgotten in their deep thoughts,
the wooden crosses are slumbering in the night.*

*Life's happiness, love, friendship
sound here like an echo of a gentle song.
The ever-good eternity arches
over the deep serenity of my heart.*

*You must be somewhere here, near me,
I feel you passed by me, you, who once will take
the dreamer to your dwelling of peace, to your
divine brightness.
You will take the dreamer there.*

Epilogue

*See, in the calm of your heart your past springs
are sleeping,
see, your beloved joys and pains are gone.
A cool contentment resides on your temples,
a happiness of autumn nights.*

*See, death has walked over your summery fields.
The light nights are gone, the crops have been
reaped.
Over the vast fields chilly stars are gazing every
night.*

Kuule, kuin askeltes alla nyt kaikaa kumea
tanner!
Syvällä, povessa maan, yön kohdussa elämä
uinuu.
Uutehen onneen, uutehen suvehen nousee
ijäinen nuoruus!

[7] Suutelo, Op. 8, No. 1 (1907–8)

Aarni Kouta

Kesän kukoistivat valkoliljat,
kaihon, kaipuun haavemielikukat.
Saapui syksy, vilu kuolinvaippaan kietoi
luonnon.
Mutta liljat seisoi yhä vielä lumivalkeissansa.
Palas yöhyt, liljain rakastettu,
joka kesän kaiken poissa viipyi
liljain valotulvaan nääntyessä.
Suuta anna, suuta, suuta, suuta anna, kuiski
kukat sille.
Hyiset huulet valkoteriin painui,
syttyi tähdet syksytaivahalle,
helkkyi hallan hopeaiset helmet,
helkkyi helmet, kulisivat kullat,
kalskahteli kylmän teräskannel,
värjyi yö ja värjyi valkoliljat.
Mutta sarastaissa maa ol' valkee,
hanget hopeisina kimmelsivät.
Kaikki nukkui talven sikiunta.

*Hear, how the hollow ground is resounding
beneath your steps!
Deep, in the bosom of the earth, in the womb
of the night life is sleeping.
To new happiness, to a new summer will rise
eternal youth!*

The Kiss

*The white lilies bloomed all summer,
the dreamy-minded flowers of longing and
yearning.
Autumn came, the chill wrapped all of nature
into a funeral shroud.
But the lilies were still standing, white as snow.
Night returned, the lover of the lilies,
who had been absent all summer,
as the lilies were drowning in a flood of light.
Give me a kiss, whispered the flowers to him.
The frigid lips pressed against the white
blossoms,
stars lighted up on the autumn sky,
the silver pearls of frost were chiming,
the pearls chimed, the gold jingled,
the steel kantele of cold clashed,
the night was trembling, as were the white lilies.
But by the dawn the ground was white,
the snow blanket was glimmering like silver.
Everything was sound asleep, it was winter.*

Oli sielusi valkea liljan kukka,
minä olin yö.
Suutelin kylmäksi uinesi umpun,
kimmelsi tähtien vyö.
Talvisten tähtien,
kylmien tulten haudalla haaveiden.
Mut' ällös sielusi talvea pelkää,
se uuden tuo keväimen.
Oli sielusi valkea liljan kukka,
minä olin yö.

8 Marjatan laulu, Op. 8, No. 2 (1908)
Eino Leino

Keinutan kehtoa, laulatan lasta
vaulussa vemmelpuun.
Nukkuos tähtiä katselemasta,
vaipuos kuusia kuuntelemasta,
uinuos äitisi lauleluun,
keinuhun vemmelpuun!

Ihmiset emollesi kantavat kaunaa.
Saanut en kylpyä, saanut en saunaa.
Pysty on kulkea pyytäjän tie –
sulleko loivempi lie?

Pakkanen viiltää, kuun sirppi kiiltää,
kuolonko kulkuset sois?

Hengitä halla, kohtalon halla,
hengitä orponi onneton pois!

*Your soul was the white lily blossom,
I was the night.
I kissed the bud of your dreams cold,
the belt of stars was shimmering.
Winter stars,
cold flames on the grave of dreams.
But your soul should not fear the winter,
as it brings you a new spring.
Your soul was the white lily blossom,
I was the night.*

Marjatta's Song

*I am swaying a child, I am rocking a cradle
hanging on an arched tree.
Go to sleep, stop watching the stars,
rest, stop listening to the spruces,
slumber to your mother's singing
in the cradle hanging on a crooked skid tree.*

*People bear a grudge against your mother.
I got neither a bath nor a sauna.
The road is steep to walk for those who beg –
might it be more gently sloping for you?*

*The cold is bone-chilling, the crescent moon
is glowing, do I hear the bells of death tolling?*

*Breathe, frost, the frost of destiny,
breathe my poor orphan away!*

Keinuos kehtoni vemmelpuinen,
tuu tuu tuutilulla!
Tuutios lapseni tuiresetuinen,
tuutios armahuinen, naurusuinen,
tuutios rinnalle rakkauden –
tais jo Unetar tulla?

9 *Kas silloin vaan* (1899)
Larin-Kyösti

Mua viehättää tuo myrskysää,
en tiedä minkä tähden.
Kun laine toistaan vasten löy,
kun ympärill' on musta yö,
kas silloin vaan mä levon saan,
kas silloin rauhan löydän.

10 *Merenkylpijäneidot, Op. 12* (1910)
Eino Leino

Mikä on hanhien havina
Vienan virran kainalossa?

Ne on kolme Hiiden neittä,
riisuit sulkansa kivelle,
menit merta kylpemähän;
illan ruskossa tulevat,
aamun koitossa katoovat.

Tuo oli Lippo linnustaja
kiven kirjavan takana,
katsoi siivet kaunehimmat.

Päivä pilvet jo punasi.

*Sway, my cradle of the arched tree,
lullaby baby!
Lullaby my sweet innocent child,
lullaby my smiling beloved child,
sleep on the breast of love –
did Unetar arrive already?*

It's only then

*I am allured by a stormy weather,
I don't know why.
When waves are crashing against one another,
when I am surrounded by a dark night,
it's only then I can rest,
it's only then I can find peace.*

Maidens Bathing in the Sea

*What is the rustling of goose wings
by the Dvina river?*

*It is the three Hiisi maidens,
who undressed their feathers on a rock
and went bathing in the sea:
they come at dusk,
they disappear at dawn.*

*There was a bird-catcher called Lippo
hiding behind a multicoloured rock,
he chose the most beautiful wings.*

Dawn was already reddening the clouds.

Nousivat merestä neiet,
löyti kaksi lentimensä;
kolmas etsi, ei tavannut.

Impi itkuhun hyrähti.

Lausui Lippo, liukas sulho:
'Saonet sulkasi takaisin,
antanet minulle suuta.'

Virkahti vilun-ihana:
'Silloin sulle suuta annan,
koska silmäs sammunevi.'

Ilkkui veitikka verevä:
'Silloin silmä sammukohon,
kun sa kutsut kullaksesi.'

Päivä vuoret jo punasi.

'Silloin kutsun kullakseni,
koska mieles muuttunevi.'

'Silloin mieli muuttukohon,
kun likistät linnuksesi.'

'Silloin linnuksi likistään,
koska hyytyvi hymysi.'

'Silloin hyytyköön hymyni,
kun me kättä kääpätähän.'

Päivä hongat jo punasi,
tuli tuska impyelle:
'Suo mulle sulkani takaisin,
tahi taattoni toruvi!'

*The girls arose from the sea,
two of them found their wings,
the third one sought hers but did not find them.*

The girl burst into tears.

*Lippo, the smooth bridegroom, said:
'I will give you your feathers back
if you give me a kiss.'*

*The chillingly beautiful one said:
'I will give you a kiss
when light goes out of your eyes.'*

*The healthy rascal joked:
'I am glad to lose the light from my eyes
when you call me your sweetheart.'*

Dawn was already reddening the hills.

*'I will call you my sweetheart
when your mind changes.'*

*'I will gladly change my mind
when you hold me and call me your love-bird.'*

*'I will hold you and call you my love-bird
when your smile fades.'*

*'I will wipe off my smile
when we shake hands in agreement.'*

*Dawn was already reddening the pine trees,
the maiden became anxious:
'Give me back my feathers,
otherwise, my father will scold me!'*

'Milloin oot minun omani?'

'Koska päivä koittanevi?'

Päivä päätänsä kohotti.
Sai pukunsa peilikylki,
antoi suuta sulhoselle
linnunluisella nokalla,
veen suulla verettömällä:
hymy hyytyi, silmä sammui,
pois kulki kultainen elämä,
muuttui mieli miehen nuoren.
Neito lentohon lehahti
noustessa kesäisen päivän.

11 Sinikan laulu, Op. 16a, No. 1 (1910)

Eino Leino

Kantoi tuuli purtta kahta
tuolle puolen lemmen lahta.
Pilvi kuun yli kulkee.

Tuonen pursi, tuima pursi
korkeana kuohut mursi.
Pilvi kuun yli kulkee.

Iloinhenko taikka surren,
nään ma Tuonen tuiman purren.
Pilvi kuun yli kulkee.

Unten haaksi, hauras haaksi,
horjuu, vaipuu, jää jo taaksi.
Pilvi kuun yli kulkee.

'When will you be my own?'

'When the dawn breaks.'

*The new day lifted its head.
The speculum-winged creature got its suit back
and kissed the groom
with a beak of bird bone,
a bloodless water mouth:
his smile faded, the light went out in his eyes,
his golden life drifted away,
the young man's mind changed.
The maiden took on her wings
while the summer day was breaking.*

Sinikka's Song

*Wind carried two sailboats
to the other side of the bay of love.
A cloud passes the moon.*

*Death's sailboat, a grim sailboat
broke the waves proudly.
A cloud passes the moon.*

*It does not matter if I rejoice or mourn,
all the time I see Death's grim sailboat.
A cloud passes the moon.*

*The dream boat, a fragile boat
is wavering, is sinking, is left behind.
A cloud passes the moon.*

Milloin heikon haavehaahden
istuessaa illoin kahden.
Pilvi kuun yli kulkee.

[12] **Lyö, sydän!, Op. 16a, No. 2** (1906–9)
Antti Juhani Rytkönen

Lyö! Lyö sydän! Lyö!
Kerran sulle koittaa yö!
Lyö kuin aalto louhta vasten
lailla kuohujen voimakasten.
Lyö! Lyö kumeean,
kohta päähän joudutaan.
Lyö! Lyö kumeean,
kohta päähän joudutaan.
Lyö! Lyö sydän! Lyö!
Edessä on pitkä yö,
pitkä yö.

[13] **Ut min väg i världens går** (1899)
Anonymus

Ut min väg i världen går
ut mot alla nejder.
Rosor säkerligen får
överallt jag ej där.
Giv av rika skatten mig
en allen i minne.
Med dess doft jag städse dig
bär i tacksamt sinne.

*When do I see the weak dream boat?
When we are sitting together alone at nights.
A cloud passes the moon.*

Beat, Heart!

*Beat! Beat, heart! Beat!
Once night will come to you!
Beat like a wave beats against the cliff,
like strong surges.
Beat! Beat with a deep hollow sound,
soon we will be at the end.
Beat! Beat with a deep hollow sound,
soon we will be at the end.
Beat! Beat, heart! Beat!
You are facing a long night,
a long night.*

My Road Leads out into the World

*My road leads out into the world
out towards all regions.
I will certainly not find roses
everywhere in the world.
Give me from your rich treasures
only one as a memory.
With its scent will forever bear you
in my grateful mind.*

14 *Elä itke impeni nuori* (1901)

Eino Leino

Elä itke impeni nuori,
jos ystäväs pettikin.
Kun pääsi mun polvelleni painat,
niin laulun mä laulaisin.

Elä itke impeni nuori,
kuin kupla on ystävyys.
Kesän kukka on kahden liitto,
sen murtavi ensi syys.

15 *Hei ja hei!* (*Eteläpohjalainen kansanlaulu*)

Hei ja hei, ja ilolla se rakkaus aljettiin,
mutta surulla se lopetettiin.
Hei ja hei, ja näin näitä flikkoja maailmalla
sitten kouluutettiin.

Hei ja hei, ja tyttö se otti reissupassin
eikä sitä nähdä kauan.
Hei ja hei, ja surevaiselle heilalleni
minä tämän laulun laulan.

Hei ja hei, ja eikä se sadan markan seteliraha
ollut ympyriäinen.
Hei ja hei, ja eikä se vanhan heilan rakkaus
ollut pysyväinen.
Hei ja hei!

Don't Cry, my dear young maiden

*Don't cry, my dear young maiden,
if your beloved friend has deceived you.
If you rest your head on my knee
I will sing you a song.*

*Don't cry, my dear young maiden,
friendship is just a bubble.
The union of two is a summer's blossom,
it will break when autumn comes.*

**Hi and ho! (Folksong from South
Ostrobothnia)**

*Hi and ho, and love started with happiness
but was ended with sorrow.
Hi and ho, and this is how these lasses
got educated in the wide world.*

*Hi and ho, and this girl took a travel passport
and won't be seen around for long anymore.
Hi and ho, and to my sorrowful boyfriend
I am singing this song.*

*Hi and ho, and the hundred marks bill
was not round.
Hi and ho, and my old flame's love
did not last.
Hi and ho!*

Eteläpohjalaisia kansanlauluja, Op. 17b
(1908–09)

16 No. 1, Niin kauan minä tramppaan

Niin kauan minä tramppaan tämän kylän raittia
kun kenkäni pohjat kestää.
Rakastelen ketä minä tahdon
ja akat ei voi estää.

Kun on liinukkavarsa ja nappulirattahat
ja itte pidän suittista kiinni.
Kun vertaistansa rakastaa,
ei tartte olla fiini.

17 No. 2, Eikä sitä sanaa sanoa saisi

Eikä sitä sanaa sanoa saisi
vanhalle mammalleni,
että rakkauden panttina on
mun hellä sydämeni.

Taaskin on niin paha olla,
jotta sydämessä veri kiehuu,
kun tuo mun rakas ystäväni
maailmalla liehuu.

18 No. 3, Huuda hautas pohjasta

Huuda hautas pohjasta,
oi rakas ystäväni.
Tälläkin haavalla taidat olla
likite sydäntäni.

Twelve Folksongs from South Ostrobothnia

I will keep walking

*I will keep walking to and from the main street
of this village
as long as my shoe soles last.
I will make love to whomever I wish,
and old wives cannot stop me.*

*I have a flaxen-maned filly and a decorated cart
and it is I who is holding the reins.
When one loves his equal,
he doesn't need to try and be fancy.*

You mustn't tell my old mum

*You mustn't tell
my old mum
that my tender heart has been taken
captive by love.*

*Yet again I feel so bad
that blood is boiling in my heart,
when the beloved friend of mine
is running around the world, away from home.*

Cry from the bottom of your grave

*Cry from the bottom of your grave,
oh my dearest friend:
even this very moment
you seem to be close to my heart.*

[19] No. 4, Voi niitä tuntia tuhansia

Voi niitä tuntia tuhansia,
joita kanssani oot sinä maannut,
ja voi niitä sanoja rakkahia,
joita oon sulta kuulla saanut.

[20] No. 5, Pappani maja on matala

Pappani maja on matala ja pieni,
ei tarvitte portahia.
Niin paljon mettäs on pitkiä puita
niin mull' on sortajia.

Eikä mun pappani perinties ollut
varsalla vetämistä.
Eikä mull' oo tämän kylän likoille
tilin tekemistä.

[21] No. 6, Poijat ne kulkee

Poijat ne kulkee kyliä
ja räitti se rajahtelee.
Seitsemän tyttöä perähäni itkee
ja minä vaan naurahtelen.

Hentullani on hempiä luonto
ja vetäväinen veri.
Henttuni kaunis katsanto
käy läpi sydämeni.

Taivas on kahden kaltainen,
on sininen ja harmaa.
Henttuni on niin hyvä olla,
jotta itsestäni sen arvaan.

Oh those thousands of hours

*Oh those thousands of hours
you have lain by my side,
and oh those dear words
that I have heard you say to me.*

My dad's cottage is low and small

*My dad's cottage is low and small,
it doesn't need any stairs.
There are as many people oppressing me
as there are long trees in the forest.*

*And my dad's heritage was so small
I didn't even need a foal to pull the carriage.
And I don't need to explain myself
to the girls of this village.*

The lads are walking the villages

*The lads are walking the villages
and the main street is resounding.
There are seven girls crying after me
and I am just laughing.*

*My sweetheart has a gentle character
and eagerness in her blood.
My sweetheart's beautiful gaze
goes straight through my heart.*

*The sky is of two kinds,
it is blue or it is grey.
My sweetheart is so happy
that I can tell without her saying.*

Henttuni silmillä sinisillä
ja poskilla punaisilla,
niillä mä itseni ilahutan
kuin rikkahat tuhansilla.

22 No. 7, Tuoltapa näkyy se punanen talo

Tuoltapa näkyy se punanen talo
ja tuulimylyyn siipi-pi.
Eikä mun iloni alene,
vaan ylemmäs se hiipii-pi.

Keskeltä merivesi lainehtii
vaan rannat on kuin peili-li.
Sievä ja soria se olla pitää
tämän tytön heili-li.

Kaunis on punakukka kesällä,
vaan syksyllä se kuihtuupi.
Kun uuden kullan seuras oon
niin vanha se mieleen muistuupi.

23 No. 8, Hautalan Heikin se kaunihiin kesän

Hautalan Heikin se kaunihiin kesän
siellä linnas olla pitää,
kun lehti on puus ja ruohot on maas
ja heilalla nuori ikä.

*My sweetheart's blue eyes
and her red cheeks:
I have my delight in them,
like rich people have in their thousands
of marks.*

There I can see the red house

*There I can see the red house
and a blade of the windmill.
My joy will not diminish,
but it is growing higher by and by.*

*The sea is billowing in the middle,
but near the shores it is placid like a mirror.
This girl's sweetheart must be
cute and handsome.*

*The red flower is beautiful in the summer,
but it withers when autumn comes.
When I am with my new flame
I suddenly remember the old one.*

**Heikki of Hautala house has to spend
the beautiful summer**

*Heikki of Hautala house has to spend
the whole beautiful summer in prison,
when there are leaves on trees and grass
on the ground,
and his sweetheart is young.*

Hautalan Heikki se sanoi,
jotta älä sinä heilani sure.
Vielä karkureissullani
sua katsomahan tulen.

Tyttö oli nuori ja lapsellinen,
sitä kauan odotteli,
vaan Hautalan Heikki se Vaasan linnas
syksyhyin asti eli.

[24] No. 9, Tuuli se taivutti koivun larvan

Tuuli se taivutti koivun larvan
ja vesi oli lainehissa.
Minäpä se istuin ja lauleskelin
henttuni kammarissa.

Tuuli se taivutti koivun larvan
ja kohotteli lainehia.
Nyt mua viedähän linnasta linnahan
kantaen kahlehia.

[25] No. 10, Siniset silmät ja punaset posket

Siniset silmät ja punaset posket
kun Ketolan Jukalla oli,
senköhän tähden sen Ketolan Jukan
pitänyt olis niin moni.

Ketolan Jukka se Ylisen Maijalle
unis tuli sanomahan:
'Minä olen köyhä renkipoika,
älä rupia suremahan'.

*Heikki of Hautala said that
Don't you worry my sweetheart.
I will come and see you
on my escapade.*

*The girl was young and naive,
she waited for a long time,
but Heikki of Hautala lived only
until autumn in Vaasa prison.*

Wind bent the top of the birch

*Wind bent the top of the birch
and the sea was billowing.
I was sitting and singing to myself
in my sweetheart's chamber.*

*Wind bent the top of the birch
and raised the billows higher.
Now they are taking me from a prison
to a prison bearing chains and shackles.*

Blue eyes and red cheeks

*Jukka of Ketola had
blue eyes and red cheeks –
was that maybe the reason why so many
would have liked to have him for themselves.*

*Jukka of Ketola came to Maija of Ylisen's dream
and said to her:
'I am just a poor farmhand,
you shouldn't mourn my death'.*

Melttoo-Jukan puukko se oli
terävä kuin nuoli.
Härsilän Martin tallin taa
se Ketolan Jukka kuoli.

[26] No. 11, Hae pois vaan sormukses

Hae pois vaan sormukses
ja kiitoksia vaan sulle,
kun sun rakas ystäväs
on vihollinen mulle.

Marmorikivestä laattia
ja peililasista ovi,
eikä se vanhan kullan sormus
sormeheni sovi.

Hae pois vaan sormukses,
se on ruvennut ruostumahan,
kun mun nuori sydämeni alkaa
muihin suostumahan.

[27] No. 12, Luullahan jotta on lysti olla

Luullahan jotta on lysti olla,
kun minä aina laulan.
Laulullani minä pienet surut
sydämeni pohjaan painan.

Enkä minä sillä laulele,
jotta mulla on heliä ääni.
Laulelennhan sillä vaan,
kun oon näin yksinäni.

*Melttoo-Jukka had a puukko knife,
as sharp as an arrow.
It was behind the stables of Martti of Härsilä
where Jukka of Ketola died.*

You're free to come and get back your ring

*You're free to come and get back your ring,
and thank you very much:
your beloved darling
is my known enemy.*

*I will get a marble stone floor
and doors made of mirror glass,
and my old sweetheart's ring
does not fit my finger anymore.*

*You're free to come and get back your ring,
it has started gathering rust,
and at the same time my young heart
has started bending towards other people.*

People think I feel happy

*People think I feel happy,
because I am always singing.
By singing I press my minor sorrows
into the very bottom of my heart.*

*And I am not singing to show off
my bright and melodious voice.
I'm singing just because
I am so lonely.*

—English translations: Jenni Lätilä



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