

AT DAWN: EARLY SHORT STORIES



BY SIMO SAKARI
AALTONEN

AT DAWN: EARLY SHORT STORIES



BY SIMO SAKARI
AALTONEN

*This is an extended sample of the full book published in
February 2022.*

At Dawn: Early Short Stories by Simo Sakari Aaltonen.
The moral right of the author has been asserted.

Copyright © 2022 by Simo Sakari Aaltonen. All rights
reserved.

*Dedicated to everyone
who still dreams
and hasn't forgotten
the magic of life and love*

Contents

<i>“At Dawn”</i>	9
I. <i>“When Evening Descends”</i>	19
<i>“Ice Cream for All”</i>	23
<i>“True Detective Story”</i>	59
<i>“The Drive”</i>	69
<i>“The Mysterious Flask”</i>	77
Fragment: <i>“Magic Train”</i>	87
<i>“The Scarecrow”</i>	91
<i>“Cloud Messenger”</i>	111
<i>“Flights”</i>	117
II. <i>“The Dolphin Galleries Remain”</i>	131
<i>“Flashes”</i>	135
<i>“God Desert”</i>	141
<i>“One Who Fell”</i>	153
<i>“She Fly Away”</i>	159
<i>“The Unvisited Wing”</i>	167
<i>“A Door in the Snow”</i>	181
<i>“Once Upon a Time of an Autumn Morn”</i>	205
<i>“Island Fragment #213”</i>	215
<i>“Oil and Water”</i>	231
Fragment: <i>“The Forge”</i>	243
<i>“Still on Earth, 21st Century”</i>	255
<i>“Like the Pillars of a Mightier Cathedral”</i>	261
III. <i>“We Leave”</i>	283
<i>“The Sands of Lethe”</i>	287
<i>Afterword with the Magic Sparrow</i>	317
<i>Reflections & Dates</i>	325
<i>About the Author</i>	342

AT DAWN: EARLY SHORT STORIES



BY SIMO SAKARI
AALTONEN

“At Dawn”

Come alive now.

Come down the wooden staircase as the house sleeps. Check you have the keys. Push the snug wooden door shut.

Drink the balm of the dawn air. Be young again.

Step barefoot across the cool packed sand and the waking lawn.

Thrill to the silence of a slumbering world. The blue purity that is always now, as yet unpolluted by human flight.

Stop to let the shiver of pleasure travel from between

your toes up the length of your spine to fire your
brain with new life.

The orange juice and coffee course through you.

Go to the wooden twin swing now.

Taste the wood with your hands and feet. Sit and
swing. Bring life.

Have no thoughts for a while. Close your eyes and sit
back. Make it a longer while. Just swing. Just breathe
the magic air. Heal under the caress of the mild
breeze of swinging.

Open your eyes. Look around. See the other houses,
other yards, blessedly free of noise, free of smug
sloth, free.

Stand up, touch the wood again, and continue on the

grass. Step over the hedge where it's closest to the ground.

Your neighbour with his shut floral back yard curtains will never know. Watch for slugs and bugs. Respect their right of life.

Pad down the wooden planks to the lake. Breathe the tree scent and be reminded of childhood. Push, with resolve, aside the adult thoughts that threaten the moment. They are a mistake in this clarity.

Go to the meeting of sand and rocks and water. Balance on the many and varied rocks under your heels. Squat to run your hand in the water. Perhaps you'll swim tomorrow.

Go to the bench. Try and fail to mould your back to the inhuman shape of the peeling slats.

You were brought here for a reason.

Be not alarmed when the swan streams into the water and glides toward you.

Remember swans are not timid creatures. Their majesty hides fierce hearts ablaze with pride and protection.

Remember the foolishness of assuming hostility where no humans are concerned. Remember you are human and concerned. Be an animal again.

Communicate calm and non-aggression with your body and natural movement and stillness in easy alternation.

Sit with the assurance of dawn and dream-fortified rest. Let the swan glide to the edge of water and slowly look at you from the corner of one eye. Be

reminded swans mate for life. Wonder if there has been tragedy or if life still holds wonder for this one.

Feel the connection to thirteen years and more in the past, when Jules would lick his paws and wash his face at the window after his luxurious Sheba and water, watching the birds with one eye.

Feel the sting in your eyes. Let the thought tickle your mind that you would give much to see him weigh in his feline way the maddening combination of water and the biggest bird he ever saw.

He loved dogs, the bigger the better. It was the dogs who cowered from him, even when he purred.

The swan turns and glides past you again.

Acknowledge the reality of the feeling of communion, of an ancient experience older than language and

wiser by far. Let the swan bring to you that which
you need and rarely allow.

The feelings and thoughts that now come are yours
alone. They last for some time.

In the distance hums the mail lady’s truck. In the sky
the sun has conquered the horizon and more. The air
is shifting from dawn to morning. The water ripples
and splashes as the swan takes off and flaps the
warming air. A circle around and a last look at you.

Wave to the swan and wipe your face.

You began this day with life and trust in life. Now go
back up the stairs and make eggs and sandwiches
and coffee for your slowly stirring family.

Pass on the gift.

I

**“When
Evening
Descends”**

When evening descends into the hanging gardens of
Ferulius Ra, the dolphins swim quietly in the
winding galleries and the philosophic tigers retire
sullenly behind columns or settle lazily athwart the
sun-warmed rocks round the sunken gardens. Then
the world asks with its sunsets and burning horizons
and veiled sickle of silver, where are you, and how
old is the universe, and when will the hour come?
Oh, hold your mantle yet a while, sky of night, for the
chill is not yet and I would taste the last of the day —
dream to catch her scent, her coming, on the breeze,
from across the sea.

**“Ice Cream
for All”**

“We could clean ’em out,” said Johnny, leaning against the convertible, fiddling with the brass buttons on his denim jacket.

Herman sat in the back, Allie in the passenger seat. The once robin’s-egg-blue convertible was their piece of faded sky on wheels, parked in the mild late-afternoon breeze. The two looked at one another, then back to Johnny, who only had eyes for the ice cream parlour across the street.

Herman’s hand went instinctively to his glasses. He got out and stood next to Johnny. Allie shrugged herself more snugly into her black leather jacket and

stayed in the car.

"I dunno, we never done nothin' like that before, Johnny," Herman said, scraping the asphalt with his scuffed boot. Johnny's were all nice and clean.

"You think it'd be worth it?"

"Sure. And look at it. What do they think it is, the fifties? The golden heyday of America? You ever see a place like that? I mean without Rod Serling creepin' from around the corner to lecture you?"

"Hey," said Allie with a frown. "Don't diss the Serl."

Johnny cast a smile at her. "Who's dissin' anyone? My point is, lollipop, ain't no more place for people like that."

Allie wasn't sure whether he meant Rod Serling or

the old couple. She chewed the bubble gum that had lost its pink flavour half an hour ago.

Herman put his hands in his pockets. “I could use another brew, gang. We got any left?”

“Sure, Herm.” Johnny pointed at the trunk with his toothpick. “Me too.”

Herman glanced at Allie inquisitively, but she was looking at three kids playing with something on the grocery store steps on this side of the sleepy street. One of them, a girl in a store-fresh red hoodie, shielded the item from the sun.

Probably a smartphone, Allie thought, picturing the brick in the glove compartment.

Herman shrugged and pulled at the trunk, then harder, and it creaked open. He stopped to look at

the scuffed old red toolbox, then pulled two brown bottles from the plastic case and shished them open, the corks landing in the trunk. He shut the trunk and gave Johnny his.

It stung real good going down. The first gulp was always the best.

"Well, you got a point, Johnny. Ain't nobody able to afford places like that without rollin' in some. Not in this day and age."

"You got that right." Johnny took a swig. He started to point a finger at the façade but turned to Herm instead. "Ain't the only reason I wanna do it. You know what it is, Herm? I'll tell you. You too, Allie. Folks like that ain't gonna make it in this world, not goin' on like that. You gotta be tough. We can help

'em. Like teachin' a lesson, right? Sure. For their own good. I mean, what'll happen to 'em when somebody really nasty rolls along? And you don't rub it in if you got that kind of money. Right, Allie? It ain't decent, nor real neighbourly, neither.”

Allie bent her head back and only slightly to the side. She took a deep breath, pursed her lips, and blew the gum out with a *Thwup!* It flew up eight feet, reached the apex, fell, missed the car by an inch, and plopped onto the pavement with a tiny wet sound.

Johnny and Herman sniggered, impressed. “Good one, Al,” Herman said.

Allie noticed the kids were looking at her. She looked away. “We ain't so neighbourly, Johnny.” She sounded 16 instead of 18.

“No, but there’s somethin’ bugs me ’bout that — that Pop and Mom.” He looked at the bright white marquee with the gilt, embossed, art nouveau words MOM & POP’S ICE CREAM PARLOR. “I oughta have landed one on his Santa Claus moustache, the way he looked at us, all pityin’. Looked at you, too, Allie.”

Allie got out a small hand mirror. “You done that, I’da kicked you in the jewels so hard you didn’t know if you was comin’ or goin’. You ever do anythin’ like that, Johnny, you’re history. Both of you. I mean it now. I don’t like violence.” She inspected her lips in the mirror, touching them with her delicate fingers.

Johnny got a look of consternation. “Aw, Allie, why ya gotta always use your own li’l mirror with all of mine right here?” He indicated the side and rear-

view mirrors. “I polish ’em for ya special.”

“They ain’t mine. A girl’s gotta have somethin’ of her own.” She snapped the round mirror shut.

Allie’s look silenced Johnny. He covered by downing the rest of the beer, then hitching up his pants that needed no hitching, already more than sufficiently held up with a belt drawn too tightly under his formerly white T-shirt.

“Anyway, what I said — who said anythin’ about really doin’ it? I was only talkin’. I got nothin’ to prove.”

Herman looked away, embarrassed.

Johnny clapped him on the shoulder and huddled them towards Allie, putting on a rakish grin. “Hey, guys, we gonna do this, right? It’ll be a lark. Nothin’

rough, promise, Allie, I ain't into that. You know that. And we get to line our pockets into the bargain, right? We'll leave 'em some, sure. But ain't this baby,” he said, banging the side of the car with an open palm, “gonna take us back without more juice. We rolled our last dimes behind them doors,” and he pointed at the brass-handled doors of the ice cream parlour, now sleeping with its curtains closed.

“Okay,” said Allie, looking uncertain. “But just what we need. Speakin' of juice, I gotta take a leak. We better not hang around, anyway.”

Johnny hopped in the car. “Right!”

Herman zipped up his windbreaker and got in the back.

“Hold on,” said Allie and got out. The children and

Johnny and Herman watched as she peeled the clammy wad of bubble gum off the pavement and folded it into an old receipt, which went in her jeans pocket. She got back in.

Johnny and Herman sank in their seats but said nothing.

The car drove off. The kids went back to their toy.

* * *

“Wait up,” whispered Allie.

“Shh! You want everyone to hear?” Johnny hissed, louder than her. They huddled up to the rickety white wooden fence in back of the ice cream shop.

Herman looked around nervously. “You don’t suppose there’re cops on the lookout ’round here?”

“Cops, schmops, Herm,” said Johnny. “What is it, babe?”

Allie held a hand out as though trying to make the night air tangible with a touch. “This is great, ain’t it, you guys? I mean, really somethin’, right?”

The two young men looked at each other, then back at Allie.

“Sneakin’ around like this, not knowin’ what’s gonna happen. We’re steppin’ outside the roles. The safe ways you’re supposed to stick to. It’s like bein’ kids again, ain’t it?”

Herman smiled at her. Johnny looked around. They all looked around. The rough white fence grew out of the untended long grass. The grass smelled of night and magic and games. Behind them, the slope of the

hill, and beyond the stripe of woodland, their car lying in wait. Somewhere in the distance a dog barked a few lazy barks. Crickets trilled out of sight.

“It is pretty great, isn’t it?” Johnny said with a grin, looking about 12.

Herman rolled his eyes as the love birds kissed right in front of him. There ought to be a law.

“Showtime, gang,” Johnny said.

They took off their shoes.

Johnny clambered over the fence.

Allie was next, moving with the grace of an acrobat, Herman thought. Well, an apprentice one.

Then Herman stepped onto the crossbeam on this side, swung a leg over the fence, and shifted balance

to that leg.

The flare of his jeans on the other leg caught on the fence and there was a loud tearing sound followed by a thump.

“Shhh!” he hissed as though it were Johnny or Allie sprawling, not him. He inspected the jeans. “Just a flesh wound,” he told the others. Off their look, he added, “Okay, the leg’ll have to go.” More looks.

“Jeans leg. Ha! Gotcha!”

Allie and Johnny shushed him with the tiniest of shushes.

There was a sudden clatter somewhere near by and they jumped, instinctively huddling closer. They stayed very still for about 30 seconds.

Allie mimed the whiskers of a cat with her fingers,

and the others let out their breaths in the cool fresh silence.

They almost tiptoed to the silvery back door, wincing at small pebbles on the pavement. There was no movement in the two windows on this side of the building. The curtains stayed closed.

Johnny whipped out his lock pick like a ray gun. Eight seconds passed with only his fingers making delicate adjustments. The lock snapped.

He turned the handle ever so slowly. Allie and Herman flattened against the wall like policemen about to make a bust. That was what you were supposed to do before entering a strange house, right?

Johnny inched the door open and they peeked inside,

trying to make out things in the dark.

Allie slipped in, finding a counter on the right and a low rectangular container on the left. Felt like a freezer. That must be ice cream capital, she thought before sneaking further in so the others could make it inside.

Herman stepped in, then Johnny. He pulled the door closed. It got pitch black.

A beam of light exploded to life in their midst, illuminating their faces like in a Karloff or Lugosi flick. Herman jumped and his hands flew into the air and his mouth opened, but all that came out was a strangled squeak.

It was Johnny switching on the flashlight, as planned. Herman lowered his arms as Allie and

Johnny stifled their laughter.

It was horrible. Suddenly laughing seemed like something they absolutely must do, and knowing that this was exactly the wrong time for it made it worse. They all felt it, Allie knew from their faces. Images flashed in her mind of what would happen if they lost it: they would bust up laughing, there would be a commotion elsewhere in the house, they would leg it into the night as fast as their feet could take them, and all they would have to show for their troubles would be a torn pair of jeans.

Allie tried to think of something sad and sobering, but all that came to mind was the squeak Herman had made. She saw Johnny digging fingernails into his own neck. It seemed to be helping. Suddenly Allie

felt able to hold things together, too.

She gave them a look that said that had been close.

Johnny pointed the beam around the room but avoided shining it directly at the swinging door at the other end of the small kitchen. The room was white, retro, and as seemingly from another time as the parlour area where they had sat half a day earlier. Nothing screamed “Valuables!” Besides, they had agreed to check the cash register before anything else.

Johnny padded with catlike care to the swinging door, enjoying the feel of the cool floor tiles through his socks.

The boots sure would have made a racket. Good thinking from Allie. She was sharp.

Johnny peeped through the little round window set in the aqua expanse of the door.

They pushed through into the parlour area, Allie last. She eased the swinging door back into place.

They went to the cash register, its ornamented old-world metal glory shining like gold in the glare of the flashlight. Their hands went out to almost embrace it — they all but fell on their knees to worship it. So close — they had done it. Surely the old couple, so outmoded in their ways, wouldn't have secured the thing other than with the lock, which Johnny was already working open.

There was a glorious *Ching!* and the cash drawer popped open. Inside was a bounty of crinkled green bills and gleaming coins.

Their hands shot for the drawer, about to plunge in and emerge like fists of pearl divers clutching treasure from the bottom of the sea.

They stopped short as though they were in a science fiction show and had sensed a force field vibrating silently around the brass and iron antique. They looked at one another, saying nothing.

Johnny got a look of renewed determination and turned back to the drawer. Allie put her hand on his wrist.

He looked at her. She shook her head, looking ashamed.

Johnny looked at his blue-striped white socks for a second, then at Allie, then back down. He pushed the drawer shut.

Herman and Allie smiled faint smiles of regret and relief.

They turned to go. Someone cleared his throat across the room.

“You fellows and lady leaving us something?” It was the old man, in striped pajamas, night cap, and the white moustache. His eyes were hard to make out behind his round spectacles. He stood near the other end of the counter. There was another door there, though not visible from their vantage point, hidden by the shelves and associated machineries of ice-cream-making joy.

He was holding something in his hand, hidden behind his leg, in the shadows.

The trio were close to bolting away through the

swinging door, but their eyes kept going to where the old man held something that may or may not have gleamed with a metal gleam.

This was strange night territory, a moment in uncharted waters, the freaking twilight shebang, and suddenly the furthest thing from their minds was fun. This could go so wrong in so many ways. News items flashed through Allie's mind: shootings, bodies found in dumpsters, rotting remains dug up from moonlit rivers by men in long trench coats. Or was that from a movie?

When Johnny said nothing and Herman looked lost, perspiration gleaming under his blond bangs, the reflected light turning his spectacles into silver coins, Allie stepped a single step forward, surprising

herself. “Sir, it was a terrible mistake.”

The man said in a low voice, “Yes, it was.” Only his mouth moved.

Allie snuck a quick glance at Johnny, who looked like he was fighting to remain in control of his bodily functions. All he could do was hold the flashlight in his shaking hand, pointed at the chessboard floor between the four of them.

“Can you tell me why?” the man said in a neutral tone.

To Allie’s surprise, Herman spoke up. “It was like a game. Seemed like a game. We didn’t realise, not until we were doing it. It’s — it’s — I don’t know what it is. But we shouldn’t be doing it.”

Despite the horrible uncertainty of the moment, each

passing second assured Allie they would make it through this okay, they would be on the road again tomorrow, laughing in the sunlight at the stupidity of it. It would all turn out fine.

"What do you think, son?" the man said. They knew he meant Johnny.

"We was — we was idiots," Johnny said in a quivering voice. "Bustin' in, stealin' old folks' money. It ain't right. I never done it, I swear, and I ain't gonna. I gotta figure things, this ain't the way, it ain't."

The old man stood silent for a moment, then said, "You packin'?"

They shook their heads vigorously, hands at their sides, except for Johnny, whose left hand held the

flashlight and made a little sideways shake. He blurted out, “Just the light, sir. It’s got Duracell batteries.”

He realised that had nothing to do with anything. Stupid, stupid! What did the others think of him?

The man made a low chuckling sound that made Johnny jump. It was just laughter, genuine laughter.

The man bent down and did something under the counter with the hand that had been holding something. He straightened up, not holding anything. “Libby, come on out, dear.”

An old woman in a bathrobe appeared, limned against the windows. “Lights, Frank?” she said calmly.

“Lights,” Frank nodded.

She flicked the light switch and the place was flooded with bright light.

Allie and Johnny and Herman squinted as their eyes adjusted. Johnny instinctively snapped off the flashlight.

The illumined ice cream parlour from out of time felt no less unreal than their stand-off in the dark. It was one o’clock at night in the small town, Allie thought, and the place was open for business like some dream bar in one of the *Zones*.

“Tell you what,” Frank said pleasantly. “Why don’t you folks sit down while Libby fixes us some mint and vanilla?” He indicated a booth to their right.

They climbed into it without a word. “Come on, now.

You can relax. Ain’t gonna be no poison bromides in them ’screams.”

Allie sat up a little straighter. “Screams?”

“Ice creams,” he said affably. “We’ll just chat is all.”

The old silver-haired woman in the fluffy purple bathrobe and plump green slippers smiled beatifically and shuffled to the ice cream machine. It hummed to life at a flick of her wrist. Frank, a green-striped Santa Claus in a matching cap, pulled up a chair to the booth.

* * *

Frank listened as the words melted out of them like a scoop of liquorice ice cream on the hood of a car in noonday sun. They were kids, confused and searching, acting tough because they had no idea

how else to act. They all had parents who worried about them.

Allie had nothing good to say about hers, but yes, they were there, waiting in the next town over for them to get back from the road trip. Yes, they even had permission, with the school holidays and all. No, they had never stolen anything, not really, seeing as how candy and comic books didn't count.

Then how come Johnny was so handy with the lock, Frank asked.

Johnny studied his own hands, blushing and looking awkward, as Herman explained that Johnny's older brother fixed cars and always had an old heap or two rusting in their parents' back yard. Johnny wasn't into messing with the engines or anything but had

started playing with wire and the locks of the more hopeless cases, and eventually got really good at popping them open. It was something to do, and pretty impressive to see.

Here Allie put an arm around Johnny’s shoulder and gave him a proud squeeze. He said it was the only thing that made people say nice things about him.

Libby brought their portions on a silver tray. She smiled happily as if this were not the first time she had served surprise visitors on a summer night. She joined them and lifted a dainty silver spoon of delicious mint green and vanilla white from the moulded fine glass to her lips, and she closed her eyes as she tasted the ice cream. Frank looked at her proudly, adjusting his gold-rimmed spectacles.

Frank spoke with kindness in his gruff old voice, but deep down was a pain that occasionally rumbled like a distant summer storm that would pass in the distance and wasn't to be feared. He and Libby had a son who was no good. He had gotten mixed up with the wrong crowd and was always in some kind of trouble. If it wasn't stealing cars, it was robbing stores. Long an adult, he was doing a two-month stretch two states over.

Libby only listened, looking at her ice cream as her husband explained this, her smile gone for that moment.

Frank said all they had ever wanted was to have a decent son and a quiet happy life. That was why they had started the ice cream parlour. The world needed something good and decent and dependable. A place

where no bad son could bring pain to anyone if they could help it. Their little piece of paradise on main street, U.S.A.

They were only barely making it month to month.

“You can see how rundown the town is,” he said. It was important to keep going when you knew there was something good you had, something that made people’s lives a little bit better. Everyone carries pain with them — here he looked at Johnny and Allie and Herman, then held hands with Libby, who didn’t look up but smiled — and that’s all the more reason to make the effort every day. “Ain’t no point to anythin’ elsewise,” he finished.

Libby spoke up then, saying their Jimmy had written them last week for the first time. He was going to start a correspondence course. He had said he no

longer knew what to do but couldn't go on the way he was.

So you see, there is hope, she said.

Allie wanted to believe it so badly her heart felt like it would burst. Her hand suddenly went to the old woman's shoulder, and though surprised, she didn't flinch away. She gave Allie a radiant smile that was like the sun coming out at night.

They sat talking into the small hours.

Outside, a stray cat prowling the night nosed their shoes in the dewy grass beyond the fence. He ducked under the fence and made his way to the main street and wondered for a moment at the light filling the shop windows and double doors behind the closed curtains with a glow that was strange in the night. He

went on his way, seeking shadow and dark and mice
hiding from the light.

* * *

When Mom and Pop’s Ice Cream Parlor opened the
next day, the mailman was the first customer, as
usual. He plopped his hat on the booth table near the
swinging door and spooned his strawberry scoops
and drank black coffee.

Remarking on how particularly clean and sparkling
the table, the booth, heck, the whole place looked
that morning, he smiled to hear old Frank, in his 50s
ice cream uniform, claim they had had some help
from some elves that had popped in after the
witching hour. They had cleaned him out, or was that
cleaned up? Anyway, they had done quite a job, but

then, it was the least they could do in exchange for their ice cream. The mailman chuckled, used to dear old Frank's tales of night visitors.

Where did they go, he asked.

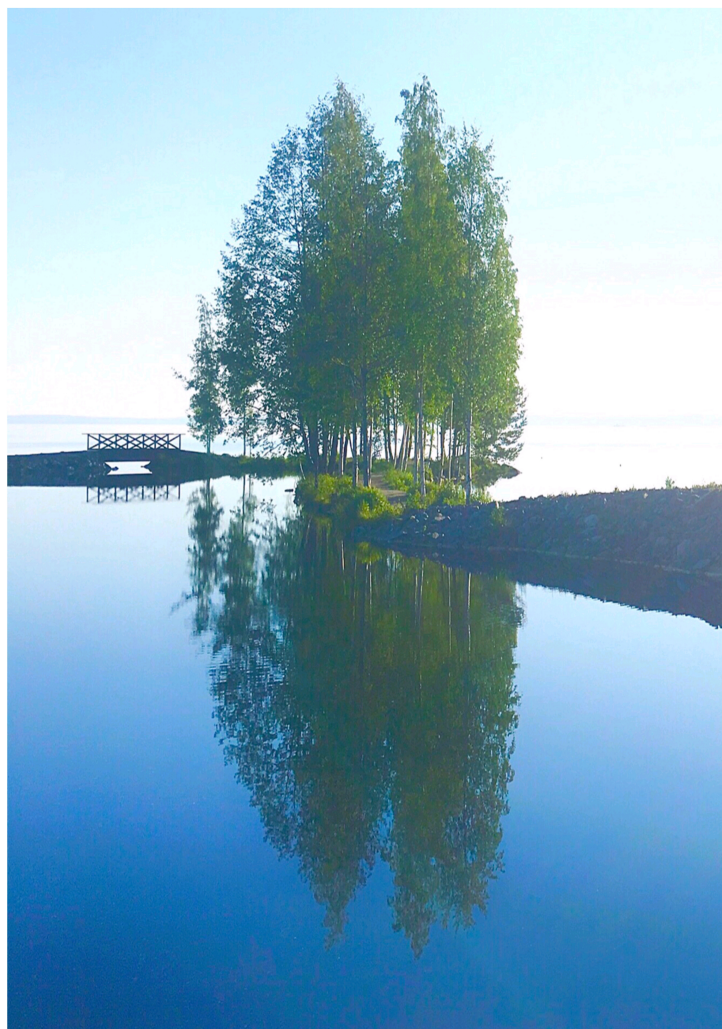
Frank looked around, looked under the table with mock curiosity. Gee, he said, now that was a good question. He had been so busy admiring the sparkle they had put on the counter and the old dependable cash register he may have missed them slipping out into the night.

He added that the mailman shouldn't be surprised to see a few new hands around here one of these days, though.

The mailman wasn't sure what to make of this, but Frank and Libby looked happier than he'd seen them

in a long time. He went back to his newspaper.

Takes all kinds, he thought, and spooned some strawberry ice cream into his coffee.



**ABOUT
THE AUTHOR
(2026)**

**SIMO SAKARI
AALTONEN**
—WRITER & COMPOSER—



simosakariaaltonen.com

Finnish writer, composer, filmmaker, visual artist, podcaster. Has lived in Finland, Iceland, Paris, and the UK.

BOOKS

Art & Love (*series, 2020–*)

At Dawn: Early Short Stories (*2022, Large Print Edition 2024*)

The Better Patreon (*series, 2026–*)

An Iceland Symphony, Op. 1: A Theatrical Symphony for All Ages (*sheet music, 2021, 2nd Edition 2024*)

Land of Youth & Beauty: Early Poems (*2022, Large Print Edition 2024*)

Tales from the North, Book I (*sheet music, 2024*)

What Now with Simo (*series, 2020–*)

You Never Know What You'll See in the Haunted Garden (*limited series, 2019–*)

MUSIC

Early Music Archive (*2023 album*)

“In the Fog, Deep” (*2024 single*)

“Land of Youth & Beauty” (*2023 single*)

Passages Dark and Light (*2022 album*)

Passages Dark and Light II (*2024 album*)

Tales from the North, Book I (*2023 album*)

“That Dark, Dark Night” (*2024 single*)

The 13th Tale (*2024 album*)

Official site: simosakariaaltonen.com

Patreon: patreon.com/TheBetterPatreon

Bandcamp: simosakariaaltonen.bandcamp.com

Podcast hosting site: rss.com/podcasts/simo

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@SimoSakariAaltonen



The Better Patreon is my private Patreon and creative online home launched on 3 April 2025.

It provides to all members a regular stream of features on a weekly 3-day cycle (Monday to Wednesday):

A weekly, fully laid out and illustrated PDF newsletter, a Creative Journal, a David Lynch Series (a book in the making), short stories, poetry, diverse short writings, full Northern Exposure rewatch posts, Monday Midnight Movies, special features about all aspects of creativity, glimpses behind the scenes, early access to all my future works before they're published or released elsewhere, and a lot more to come.

patreon.com/TheBetterPatreon





The Better Patreon is both a website and a book series, with the former launched in April 2025 and the latter in March 2026. These books will collect between two covers all the written and visual content month by month, making this a true and unique

THE BETTER PATREON VOL. 1: APRIL 2025

- ✓ 4 INTRODUCTORY POSTS
- ✓ 4 NEWSLETTER ISSUES
- ✓ 5 SHORT STORIES
- ✓ 12 POEMS
- ✓ 12 ART & LOVE CHAPTERS
- ✓ MONDAY MIDNIGHT MOVIE #1
- ✓ 4 NORTHERN EXPOSURE ENTRIES
- ✓ HEALTH & CREATIVITY: "LET'S GET BETTER"
- ✓ AN ICELAND SYMPHONY: I. "THE MUSIC BOX"
- ✓ GRANT APPLICATION FILE #1
- ✓ WORK-IN-PROGRESS CHAPTER
- ✓ CHIEF SEATTLE 1854 SPEECH VERSIONS

The Better Patreon is both a site and a book series.
Every member at the time of publication gets each
new volume for free.

*alternative way of experiencing this Patreon. Note:
by purchasing any volume directly from The Better
Patreon Shop you also receive the File Vault of all the
multimedia items not possible to include in a book.*

AT DAWN: EARLY SHORT STORIES



This book collects my short stories so far. Written over a period of many years, they explore many fields:

Prose poetry, youthful night adventure, introspective science fiction, philosophical horror, chaptered dream exploration, humorous biographical detective fiction, seafaring sequel to one of a very young H. P. Lovecraft's stories, fragments...

This is the earliest harvest of my short fiction writing, from the dawn of my life. The stories were written when I was still looking for my most special things and the truest desires of my secret heart.

Having since found them, my future writings will mostly be very different. So while some of the stories in this collection feature strands I may develop further in those future stories, others will be the only ones of their kind I'll ever write.

But now, my fellow dreamer, it's dawn. The world is young again...

— Also available in a *Large Print Edition* —



**LAND OF YOUTH & BEAUTY:
EARLY POEMS**

by Simo Sakari Aaltonen

This book collects my poems so far. Written over more than two decades, they explore life in all its hues, dark and light and the rainbow in between:

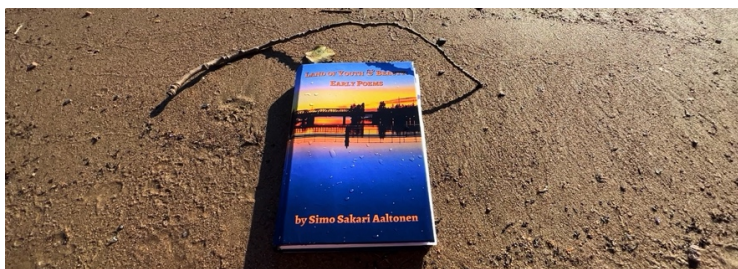
A marionette's dream, a pair of sonnets, a bayou tragedy, whirling donuts, nocturnes and nightmares, encounters in the dark and in sunlit moments...

Above and through all of it shimmers the greatest thing of all: the Land of Youth & Beauty — the magic theatre we enter when we love and feel truly loved.

“This happened when the world was young and love could never die, when the skies flamed every morning and it rained every night...”

— Also available in a *Large Print Edition* —

Land of Youth & Beauty: Early Poems — Lake Presentation



A short film (12:36) viewable on my official YouTube artist channel and my official site. The soundtrack was later released as my first single, “Land of Youth & Beauty”.

FILM



My early filmed works (2015–) are featured on my YouTube channel, presented on my Patreon, and embedded on my official site.

With few exceptions, these short works were conceived and executed entirely by me: writing, directing, cinematography, lighting, music, sound recording and engineering, featured art, editing, occasional acting, and everything else needed.

I look forward to working with actors in the future with my coming works in this field. You can find my full credits and these works listed on IMDb. I also actively continue with my screenwriting.

simosakariaaltonen.com
patreon.com/TheBetterPatreon
youtube.com/@SimoSakariAaltonen

MUSIC



From the bleakest dark to the brightest light, my music explores the full range of human experience. Behind it strives a soul hoping to reach likeminded others out there.

You can buy all my released music from my Patreon Shop or Bandcamp — where you can also read the detailed sleeve notes — and you can find it on numerous download and streaming platforms.

patreon.com/TheBetterPatreon
simosakariaaltonen.bandcamp.com

AN ICELAND SYMPHONY, Op. 1

— A Theatrical Symphony for All Ages —

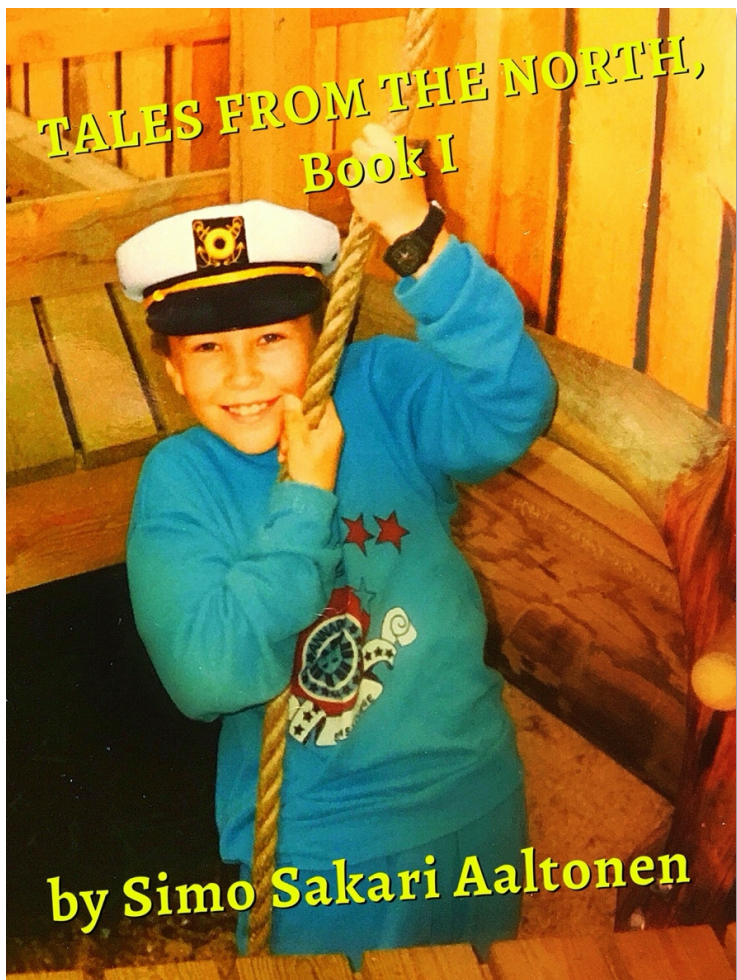
2nd EDITION

XX. Love (An Iceland Symphony)

♩ = 48
rit.
con sord.
p
a tempo ♩ = 48
con sord.
p

by **Simo Sakari Aaltonen**

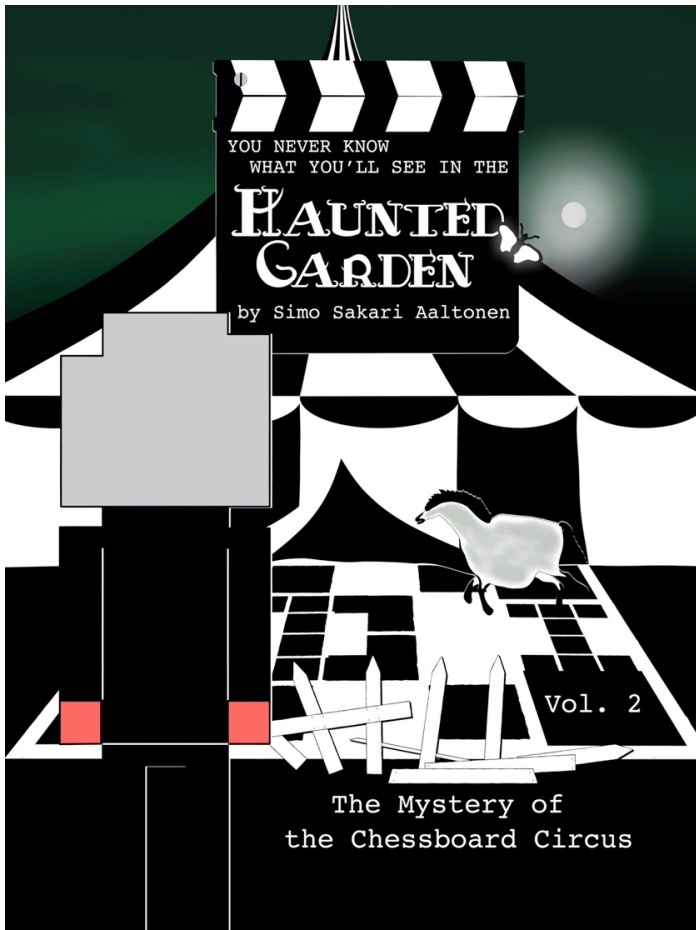
An Iceland Symphony is a musical composition of 21 sections involving theatrical elements. Its performance calls for musicians of all ages from the youngest to the oldest. This book includes the full sheet music complete with performance instructions.



Tales from the North, Book I is a set of 12 piano duets for two pianists and pianos. The pieces cover a wide range of moods, styles, and approaches using the composer's timeless musical language. 130 pages with a 10-page introduction.



You Never Know What You'll See in the Haunted Garden is a 3-part graphic novel featuring Rex the former game actor, Pregnant Horse of the Lascaux caves, and Alannah the butterfly. Vol. 1 introduces us to the mysterious Haunted Garden in Iceland with a series of visions.



Vol. 2: The Mystery of the Chessboard Circus *involves our heroes in an adventure where the visions find form in a series of events. And as with the first volume, clues to the future already await discovery in this, our second journey into the dream world known as the Haunted Garden. Vol. 3...?*



This 2020–2025 podcast used to be my central outlet for thoughts, feelings, passing fancies, memories, dreams, appreciations, and more.

Maybe a better metaphor would be a flickering campfire after a long day out in the wild — or in the inner wild. Or perhaps a random book with a flashlight under the blanket in a beautiful summer cottage, somewhere in eternity.

I recorded every episode extemporaneously, transcribed them afterwards, and eventually collected each season into these printed volumes. Part journal, part memoir, part musings on art and life, part strange humour, and part me reaching out to other souls out there.

Every edition brings every word of each season onto the printed page, for reading or leafing through at your own pace. This also makes the podcast available in its entirety to everyone with any hearing loss.

Unedited, unexpurgated, and with an introduction, a table-of-contents summary in the style of old books, and a varying number of footnotes in every volume.

—Simo



Diverse short writings about art, life, love, creativity, dreams, and more. Each volume features 124 concise chapters, perfect either for leafing through or taking in many at a time.

As a further embodiment of the things discussed on these pages, Vol. 2 evolves the series in an even freer direction. It also includes a number of extra chapters at the back, unseen since the author removed them from a website called Medium.

This book collects my short stories so far. Written over a period of many years, they explore many fields:

Prose poetry, youthful night adventure, introspective science fiction, philosophical horror, chaptered dream exploration, humorous biographical detective fiction, seafaring sequel to one of a very young H. P. Lovecraft's stories, fragments...

This is the earliest harvest of my short fiction writing, from the dawn of my life. The stories were written when I was still looking for my most special things and the truest desires of my secret heart.

Having since found them, my future writings will mostly be very different. So while some of the stories in this collection feature strands I may develop further in those future stories, others will be the only ones of their kind I'll ever write.

**But now, my fellow dreamer, it's dawn.
The world is young again...**

—Simo