

— Season 1 —

What Now



with Simo

by SIMO SAKARI AALTONEN

— Season 1 —

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What Now with Simo, Season 1 by Simo Sakari Aaltonen. The moral right of the author has been asserted.

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For a future reader
and my friends Robin Bradley
and Logan L. Masterson

With their passing life got lonelier
They never judged or abandoned me

I wish you guys were still here

“O stay and hear, your true love’s coming,

That can sing both high and low.”

—Feste in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, Act II Scene 3

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W. P. Kinsella — Featuring Kevin Costner — A few years ago someone asked me who my favourite actor was — The question took me by surprise — More a matter of the story than any actor — Edward James Olmos, Christopher Walken — No good answer — Hero stuff — This most unassuming form of heroism — A lot of people do things for the wrong reasons — Narcissism, desire to impress — The people who simply keep life going — No living under a dark cloud — Ray Kinsella — A humility and gratitude at what he has in life — The greatest treasure a person can have — Working through his issues — The emotional core of this film — The pain of having said something you regret — Too late — A story of a second chance — Humanity and genuine feeling — Another facet of that diamond-hard pain — Parents go through literal trauma in raising a family — The price they pay — The very least we can do — Exceptionally beautiful soundtrack by James Horner — When he was asked to score it — Speechless — Simplicity and taking its cue from the film itself — A big symphonic score would have been all wrong — Appropriate music — A fascinating thing about writing film music — The greatest people — A crazy and unexpected time — Beacons of sanity

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the hippie generation — Those ideals — *Shoeless Joe* by W. P. Kinsella — Carrying the ideals into adulthood — The essentially teen dream of just flower power and making peace signs — What creating peace actually takes — Lovely humorous strain — Ray tried to like sitar music — People who aim to project enlightenment — Dalai Lama cookie story recap — Breaking a monastic rule — Maturity — To be continued

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defending — A place for anger as long as remaining in control —
James Horner Discusses Field of Dreams (12 mins.) featuring Horner
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 thoughts and feelings in your own voice — Every voice is unique
 — Ray Bradbury: “The April Witch” — Spring — “How could I
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 life and what isn’t — It’s possible to forget beauty — Some series
 only want you to watch another episode — Season-concluding
 thoughts — Pilot season — Remember fire safety — Baking paper
 — Just me — Take care

About Me

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Introduction

A freeform, wide-ranging podcast on any topics foremost on the host's mind at the time of recording. Particular favourite topics include creativity and all the arts — music, films, screenplays, fiction, poetry, comics, games, comedy, and everything in between. Messages from listeners welcomed for possible inclusion in an episode. Note that sending a recording for inclusion in an episode of this podcast does indeed implicitly give me permission to do so.

What is this?

It is a transcript of every episode from the 1st season of my first podcast series, *What Now with Simo*.

I would have named it just *What Now*, but that was already in use, many times over, plus it would have been hopeless in terms of searchability.

There are some benefits to having a name described by one friend as Lovecraftian. Even one fragment of that name

makes for instantly improved findability.¹

* * *

Editorially there were two choices for this book: faithful transcription or wholesale re-editing into something like essays.

For numerous reasons I by far prefer the first option. This is another form of presenting the same material, and I did want to present the *same* material.

I also find the resulting texts more interesting in this unedited form. There are also questions of information density and memorability that make me sure this was the best decision.²

¹ Unfortunately I'm not the only one with these three names ever to have lived. This fact is the bane of my visibility on Google. There was at least one other person with this name who lived before my time and — curses — also happened to be an artist. My nemesis. The very sight of — just kidding.

² Many books — like some textbooks written for students — fail to present the material memorably for the reason that every sentence in them is meant to be remembered. They would achieve their aim better if there were an ebb and flow of denser and looser passages. Likewise, something being a little skewed

Plus this way all the content becomes available for anyone with any hearing loss.

* * *

For grammar and punctuation hawks:

As happens with spoken language, there are moments of creative grammar here. Mistakes, some call them. All those were knowingly left in.

Likewise I adopt a relaxed and flexible attitude towards commas. Every comma and absence of one is intentional. Languages are living, creative things.

When writing, editing, proofreading, or translating something for someone else, I'll produce 100% accurate and grammatical English, as sophisticated as desired. And since I may also in the future wish to write something for someone else, the direction in which I've consciously taken my use of language in my private life and for my own projects might be seen as shooting myself in the foot.

or unusual is immediately more memorable. Many poets and songwriters have an instinctive or conscious understanding of this.

The fact remains that as a private person and for the purposes of my creative work I now prefer to use English that doesn't stray too near to the Queen's English.

Poetry, the First Nations short stories of W. P. Kinsella,³ David Lynch, and many other influences have shown me there are more expressive and meaningful forms of English than that. So these days I aim for something in that direction.

* * *

Most of the people in this world don't speak perfect English. Many haven't had the opportunities in life for schooling like that, and many have dyslexia. That is no reason to look down on or make fun of them.

So no, I have no sympathy for language Nazis. It's a selfish and entitled attitude to take, especially in this day and age, when everyone should know better.

* * *

³ The first two collections of these are *Dance Me Outside* (1977) and *Scars* (1978).

I'm also really interested in the evolution of non-fiction as well as fiction books. Among my favourite books and inspirations for this and future works have been John Cage's *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage* (1961) and David Lynch's *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* (2006). Both blew away the assumptions I had subconsciously had about the limits of what books can be.

I was also thrilled when I flipped through one of Kim Stanley Robinson's science fiction novels in a bookstore and saw that he had whole chapters that were just lists — listing landscape features or things seen, or something of that nature. (I have read his works intermittently in chronological order and haven't yet gotten to that novel, so I'm vague on this point.)

And I enjoy reading materials that were originally spoken. Interviews, transcribed talks, dictated memoirs, and such. Rod Serling wrote by speaking into a recorder.⁴ David Lynch often writes by speaking. Reading text produced

⁴ A Dictaphone.

this way is a whole different thing than reading something created all along as text on a page.

There's a biography of J. D. Salinger called *Salinger* (2014) by David Shields and Shane Salerno. It's an oral biography made up of segments of interview materials, quote after quote, with each person telling things in their own words. A collage of quotes. Again, spoken words on a page.

Books can be anything.

* * *

I'm interested in the relationship between spoken and written language. How something written sounds when spoken aloud and how something spoken aloud reads when written down.

Spoken language moves through time and appears to us one word at a time, whereas the written word we can see in diagram, from a height, the layout of it, as it lies on the page, and our eye can go sometimes in less than a blink of an eye from one part of the text to another.

A thread of thought may seem to be leading somewhere,

particularly when being spoken, and on the written page it can be seen to be a side path that is only seen so far until it disappears behind the trees — like one of the “that’s another story to be told another time” crossroads in Michael Ende’s *The Neverending Story* (1979). I see value in such meandering.

Sometimes meandering down little byways that peter out — or seeing others do so — can lead to things more useful than fully completed roads or thoughts.

* * *

Many thanks to everyone who has listened to the podcast or is reading this book, and extra special thanks to Maren for her great message for episode 1.7 and for her permission to include it in this printed edition.

Wishing you a great day and good reading.

—Simo Sakari Aaltonen, Tampere, 24th of May 2020

1.1 Corona, Krónur, and Creativity

Greetings, and welcome to the first episode of my podcast, which I am calling *What Now with Simo*.

To open this up by explaining the title, it simply refers to the fact that I want this to be a spontaneous and unplanned podcast. And actually I'm thinking of it more as like a late-night radio programme might be. Something that you can listen to that isn't like a high-pressure, hard-sell kind of thing.

And I am not going to do much in terms of fancy tricks, and I'm going to start out very minimal and see how I want to evolve this over time. But it's important for me not to make this a thing that I would stop enjoying doing. So I am keeping things simple for now.

I would say that your enjoyment of this podcast will depend largely on whether you find my way of expressing myself and my way of thinking something that you enjoy or not. If not, then I would recommend simply of course finding the things in this world that you really do enjoy.

Life is too short.

I encourage everyone to only follow those things that really speak to you. That's one thing I want to say right off. I'm not going to try to make this something that will keep everyone's attention. I'm not going to think in terms of how many minutes I've been talking about something. I may talk about the same thing for a long time or just jump from one topic to another. That's actually how my thought processes work.

It is also pretty much how I see life working, when we really look at it. It's usually not only a linear progression from place A to B. There are surprises, sudden shifts, of all kinds, on every level, and so I think this is more how life works. And I think it's boring to have something that is planned always and that always proceeds according to some layout or script and so on.

You may also notice a lot of experimentation as I make these first episodes in particular. I'm going to see what kind of results I'm most happy with in terms of how far I am from the microphone. My thinking on this may not be

the same as people usually have, which seems to be — people these days favour very close microphone placement, which can sometimes give the feeling that the person is talking straight into your ear.

This would lead me easily into another fascinating topic — fascinating to me, at least — which goes back all the way to the early days of recording and recorded music. But let's leave that for another time, because I want to keep this first episode fairly short and focus for now on what I want this to be.

And I mentioned that *What Now* is like a descriptive title, in that it is what is happening now: what I'm thinking about, the things foremost on my mind, anything that is interesting me at that moment. And I will also occasionally speak some about my own life, but only when it relates to some topic.

Or I should say most of the time when it relates to some topic. Sometimes I may mention something just because I feel like it. Again, I'm very keen to avoid setting any boundaries to this.

That is also why the title is so abstract. It can cover anything, because the “what” can be anything and, well, the moment it happens is now. So, yeah, that’s pretty much the title.

And I’m also going to describe my situation when it comes to the coronavirus — COVID-19 — situation. I’m recording this from Iceland, from a hotel where I am staying. I started my trip here just before they started strongly advising against travel.

At the point when I left on my trip, which I had planned a long time in advance, I took careful measure of the situation and looked into it and did the research, and looked at the recommendations of the Finnish official pages of the foreign ministry and the Icelandic recommendations also. Iceland has even their own COVID-19 info pages. And none of those recommended against travel at that point. But that changed shortly after my arrival.

So I have, for the safety of everyone — not only myself, of course — I have mostly stayed in my hotel room and doing

my work, and creative work also. And I will be talking about both of those over the course of this podcast series.

I still don't feel comfortable calling it a podcast, because that sets certain expectations in people's minds. And I am almost going to be like an anti-podcast podcast. Because I don't want to do any of the things that I noticed I had subconsciously absorbed as being something that I *assumed* everyone expects from a podcast. I want this to be, like I said, a relaxed thing, a calming thing.

And this is also my attempt to start leaving a more lasting and meaningful legacy than I have been able to do for example via social media. I have noticed over the years that social media are not the right places — I'm using the plural because "media" is plural — it's not the right place for many of the things that I most want to talk about.

And anyway, most of the things you put on social media — they just sink after posting. They shortly afterwards just disappear. So it's not a way to create a legacy.

* * *

I think there is something very unique about hearing a person's thoughts and feelings expressed in their own voice.

I have the greatest respect for writing. And of course I myself am a writer also. But I have to say that I'm very grateful for the recorded works — I should say, I'm calling them actually works — but I'm referring to, like, interviews and appearances that were recorded by some of my favourite creative people, like Ray Bradbury. He did tons of interviews in his lifetime. He happens to be one of my favourite writers, by the way, and I will most likely mention him quite often in episodes to come.

On the other hand, there are some people, of course, who I admire greatly and of whom we have either no or very few voice samples of. And I find that it really helps to form a connection and to get the nuances of their thought and them as people when you can hear their voice. I think it's a wonderful thing, and really I think we should be grateful, to be able to do this.

I don't mean only to make, for example, podcasts. I'm

talking of the very act of speaking. We actually can express ourselves in this magical way. I'm not exaggerating, I think, in saying it that way.

The likelihood is that many people will not like this podcast at all. Many will hate my voice. Some may like it. Some may be indifferent. But, in the end, I believe that the only thing we really have that we can offer to the world is ourselves. There is no point in trying to do something that somebody else can do, or be the same way that somebody else is. Because that already exists. You don't need to duplicate it.

That's why to me it can be frustrating when people who are very unique and whom I admire very much sometimes compare themselves to some famous person and say that they wish they were more like that famous person in this or that aspect. Because the reality is that what makes that person⁵ so beautiful is the unique combination of all the things that they are — and are *not*. I'm talking both

⁵ The one comparing herself or himself with someone else and feeling unhappy about it.

externally and internally: how they look, but of course more importantly how they are deep down. The combination of everything that they are. That is, in the end, the most precious thing that you can share.

And I find that the creative people whom I admire the most are the ones who have found ways to give of themselves and to give permission to themselves to be, deeply, just themselves. Not in a selfish way. But to let the best of themselves develop and grow.

As you can see, I can express a simple thought in many, many words. In this case I just wanted to say that this is my way of trying to put myself out there in such a way that if it works for someone, then it works. If my voice is comforting to someone, then I am very glad. If it feels like anything positive in this difficult time, or in times to come... You know, there will be a time when I will be gone, one day. It might be many decades from now, or sooner. Because we really never can know. And I think that's a healthy thing to keep in mind.

But anyway, there will come a time when I am gone and

what will remain behind are the things I created and the memories I left behind. And this podcast, I think, will be worth more than any amount of text-only social media posts or memes that I might share.

I have to believe that there are people who can relate to something I'm doing, or the way I am as a person.

Otherwise I wouldn't be doing this. After all, that's something that every creative person — when they put themselves out there, it does involve implicitly the feeling that what they are doing is worth it. Because it means something to *them*. And because we are all, you know, part of this same huge thing called life, it can mean something for others as well.

And I have actually struggled over the years to be really myself in the way I express myself, because I used to try to be more logical and express myself in ways that actually didn't really reflect the way I think or the way I am.

This rambling, long introduction may give you some idea of how I actually work and how I actually am as a person.

* * *

I just don't think that any of us have time to waste in this life.

I have tried over the years to open up as much as I can — without being stupid about it. There are people who want to harm other people, of course. But as much as I can open myself up, creatively, and to speak from the heart — those are things that really matter to me. And this podcast is my maybe biggest step so far.

I really had many, many years in my life, up until recently, when I really just hated hearing my own voice. But it happened over the last several years — or I should say maybe even a decade — that there were various friendships — but I should say actually only a handful of friendships — I could even go further and say that I'm talking mainly of a few people — with whom I was able to start having a regular exchange by words. Whether it was by Skype or Messenger voice or video calls or WhatsApp or in real life. And I think I got better, slowly, over that time, in expressing myself. And I noticed when sometimes

I would listen back to some of these messages I was leaving, when I was talking to a friend and we were sharing some of our thoughts — I realised that I no longer disliked my own way of expressing myself so much.

That doesn't mean that I think I'm so great. It doesn't mean that I'm special, except the same way that everyone is. But it means that I feel ready to do this.

People who have been in contact with me on social media may have noticed that I have really not shared almost anything where I speak. Except two things that I can think of. No, well, three things. But those were just social media things that I had up for a while. Some of them actually are still available. Maybe even all — all three that I'm thinking of.

But all the rest I did in silence.

Like, I recorded myself playing piano very badly several years ago when I was just practising. I had started to teach myself music. And I didn't speak in them because at that point I didn't know how to do it in such a way that I could feel that I'm expressing myself in a way I can be happy

with.

* * *

I guess an important part of the first episode is to say a few words about the logo I have chosen. It is a key ring in which there are the two most familiar musical clefs. They're called clefs. The word comes from old French — the word “clef”. And it actually just meant “key” — like a key to a door. The word has changed in modern French, and I believe it's *clé* or something like that.

What you see on the key ring are the treble clef and the bass clef. And of course the most common contexts in which people see these are on the piano grand staff. The treble is for the higher part, the bass obviously for the lower part. Even though these are musical symbols, to me this symbol of these things together, the ring and — you know, because a ring is a circle. A circle represents completion and completeness. By having this symbol I am trying to encapsulate — for myself if no one else, it's not really important whether the symbol is understood — I'm trying to say that this podcast will cover everything from

the highest to the lowest, and far and wide.

Or I should say not necessarily that it *will* cover. But there are no limits to it. I didn't want to start a podcast only about music, for example, as maybe suggested by this symbol.

I will talk a lot about music because music is something that has always been very important to me, and in recent years I started studying it really seriously in order to be able to create some myself. I have ended up becoming a composer, and I am actually now working on my first large-scale composition, which I am going to publish later this year, and it is called *An Iceland Symphony*.

* * *

The name comes from not only the fact that I wrote a lot of the music for that in 2019 — the first few months of 2019, when I was in Iceland just by myself, meeting no one in that period of time. I was doing a lot of creating in that time. And also because it reflects many of my feelings, things that have either happened or that have some meaning to me — it all kind of went into the music

naturally. And it's also an Iceland symphony because it is something that happened in Iceland.

(It's not *The Iceland Symphony*. It would be crazy to call any symphony that. At least if the person were being serious.)

And while I've been here now only for a short while this time — this is my fourth visit to Iceland as I record this — I continued working on that symphony, piecing it still together. It needs finalising and putting the pieces together, and so on.

And I'm creating demo versions of different parts of it. Hopefully in the end I'll have reasonably representative demo versions of the whole work that I can play or share with someone who might be interested in actually performing or publishing this.

I am going to start looking for a music publisher also at the same time, but most likely I will self-publish this.

* * *

And so to sum up that symbol, to me that's the most concise encapsulation of anything and everything. It goes

from the highest note to the lowest note.

I should also mention, in case somebody listens to this podcast sometime far in the future, and if in fact it did happen — and by “it” I mean that there is the possibility that I will at some point decide that I want to change the title of my podcast — and why not? After all, it’s my thing, and there’s no rule about it. If I think of a title that would leave me the same kind of freedom, then I would choose it. But for now, I thought it was time to get started with this and not go for perfection.

I think perfection — ideas of everything needing to be just right, or giving up — that’s a problem for many creative people. Or if not giving up, then stalling forever, which can be a slower form of giving up. Because one day the days will be over, the nights will be over, and if you haven’t done it by then, it will never happen.

* * *

I should mention what my situation is with regard to my return to Finland. Because at this point all Finnish citizens who have their permanent residence in Finland have been

advised to return back to Finland, and I have been waiting around for several days to see what will happen, because my flight company, the airline that I am using, has been drowned under by contact attempts, of course, from people all over the world trying to make their own arrangements.

And I already had a ticket, a return ticket back to Finland, reserved for the 31st of this month — the last of this month. But that flight, I learned only today, has been cancelled, and I was able to get an earlier flight.

Without giving too much details about my travel plans — broadcasting it to the whole world, who must be listening, of course — I will only say that I will be leaving in some days after recording this. I still have some time here in Iceland.

So I will continue here until my trip, doing my own things and working on my Iceland symphony. And I must say that I think this trip also added something to that symphony that would not have been there if I had not made this trip.

I often make choices intuitively, and they may not seem like they are practically justified. To make a trip that has no specific purpose other than to be working and creating, mostly at a hotel room, and not even meeting other people — to some people that might sound a bit crazy. We all have our own things that help us in life. For me, travel and a change of scenery are often very important for that.

And to me, Iceland is a very special and unique country. If I had never experienced Iceland and had the fortune to know some Icelanders, I would never have created this symphony, for example. And it would never be — any music I would have made would not have been — the way it's going to be.

While aiming to pretty much wrap this first episode up now, I should say how much I have appreciated all my contacts with Iceland and Icelanders. People here have been — the majority of them have been — wonderful. And the good experiences have far outweighed any negative ones.

* * *

Right now, by the way — this is one thing I also wanted to mention about this podcast — you may hear some ambient sounds. There is traffic outside the window. I'm not going to eliminate any environmental sounds. I will be, in the future, recording this in many different places, just wherever I happen to be.

This is one of those things that I referred to earlier. For some strange reason I had absorbed this clinical thinking about making a podcast, that things would have to be pristine and hi-fi, and I would have to get everything technically right.

Then I asked myself: “Why do I assume any of this, and why am I setting these limits on myself?”

For example, are environmental sounds not a wonderful thing? Why would you want to eliminate that? Why would you want to do only something very studio-bound? Unless you happen to be in a city and doing like a radio interview programme and you actually have to isolate a lot of the sound.

But if the sounds you're hearing is traffic in the

background or the sound of rain on windowpanes, then those only add to the experience, as far as I'm concerned.

I remember I was once making one of these very brief videos where I just sat on a piano stool I had at that time — I had a white digital piano at that time — and when I made the recording, I just recorded with a microphone that was off to one side, and when I sat down, the chair creaked.

And I noticed that even if I were watching this as something created by somebody else, I would have liked that detail of the chair creaking.

I don't like how clinical and overprocessed things have become in many fields of art and entertainment. That's not really life anymore, or lifelike.

I like to have some texture, and I like watching and listening to things in any kind of quality as long as the content is worth it. I watch a lot of YouTube videos where it's below VHS video quality. Or, talking of another field, I listen to a lot of old music. A lot of it, of course, is very limited in the range of reproduction they were capable of then. And in my own case, for example, I prefer to listen to

the recordings from those old days that have kept the crackle. If you eliminate the crackle, you also eliminate part of the music, and it starts sounding like something muffled inside, like, some kind of fabric container. That is actually just very poor remastering if they lose so much of the music.

Anyway, I like record crackle. I like the crackle of fireplaces. My dream home in the future — which would be like a warm house on a hill — it would have a fireplace, of course.

* * *

So I think this is a good place to start wrapping up this first episode. I want to say just a few more words.

I want to tell people that the world situation with the coronavirus — this is something that we just need to get through. And the way to get through it is simply to make the clever choices, to remain calm, and help each other out.

If you have people that you are not sure are okay, why not reach out to them and ask them: “How are you doing? Are

you okay?” Whether they are young people, old people — just anyone that you can think of that you know. Make sure that they’re okay. That’s very important.

I have some experience of loneliness and isolation and things like that, and maybe I’ll talk some more about that in the future, though not in a depressing way — that is something I’m determined on: not to be depressing — but as just experiences I’ve been through.

You will notice I’m saying “I have been through”, which means that they were survivable — in the end.

To many people this isolation has come as a shock, and they have difficulty adjusting to it, and it is frightening. To me it has not been so frightening because I have had many experiences in life that have in a way, I would say, prepared me to be better able to cope with this now. So there is a silver lining to even unpleasant and painful life experiences.

Again, I just want to say that if you are feeling anxious about all this, just know that this is a time that will pass.

One day we will go to concerts again, we can be in the open air, we can run up to our friend that we've missed and hug them tight.

All that is going to happen in the future. For now we just need to sit tight. This may be a good time to reflect on those things that we have been doing in our lives that may not have been the right way to live this life. I am also speaking to myself at the same time and reminding myself about how important it is not to get drawn down by petty things, or bitterness.

You know, it's okay to feel bitter if things have happened that have been painful. It's okay to feel bitterness. I don't like the kind of thinking that says you have to always be positive and only smile and pretend like everything's okay. No. You just need to be honest. And work towards getting past the bitterness, for example, in this case, if we are talking of just this one emotion. But the same thing applies to anything else.

Even though, of course, nobody wished for this to happen — it is going to cause and already has caused great

suffering, great pain, loss of life, and we don't yet know how bad it will be — it's going to be over one day. I just want to encourage everyone who may be feeling downhearted and even maybe a little bit beaten by this thing. It's only a temporary thing. We will have the world again. It will be something that we can't yet know exactly what it's going to be like. It may be a whole new kind of world. But, it will have a lot of the old beautiful things in it. And maybe some new beautiful things as well.

I would say that almost certainly a lot of us will be very, very glad when we can again do the things that maybe — because we had gotten so used to them — we had started to take for granted. That's just human nature and psychology that a little bit of that happens to everyone. Or a lot of it. Again, it's okay. You don't have to feel bad about it.

But, you know, this is how we grow as people. We recognise that there is something that we have not been able to enjoy, and sometimes it just takes that distance. You have to be away from something — or, indeed, someone —

to know their real value to you. Being unable to hug...

In my case, I will be unable to even go see my parents when I return to Finland, for at least 14 days. After that it is apparently allowed for family members to see each other, even if they are in a risk group.

* * *

I'm thinking of all my friends and all the people I care about. Whether I'm in contact with them or not, I will just say that I hope you are all doing well, and I hope that you will stay safe through this.

Make the smart choices. And help the people around you and the people that you know make the smart choices as well. We will get through this together.

* * *

I want to finish this first podcast by reading a Shakespeare sonnet that I happened to come across while reading an issue of a magazine from the time of the Second World War.

* * *

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April dressed in all his trim
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew.
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose.
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.

Yet seemed it winter still and, you away,

As with your shadow I with these did play.

* * *

1.1 Corona, Krónur, and Creativity

Good night, and thank you for listening.

**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*)

Solid Gold: David Lynch — 90 Concise Chapters on Him and His World (*2026*)

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

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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.*

**SOLID GOLD:
DAVID LYNCH**

***90 Concise Chapters
on Him and His World***
**by SIMO SAKARI
AALTONEN**

*A kaleidoscopic, appreciative dive into the world of
David Lynch via 90 chapters examining as many key
facets of his life and works.*

This is the first book I ever wrote fully during the existence of my Patreon, members of which were able to follow the process week by week as I posted three new chapters every Monday over a period of 30 weeks from late 2025 to early 2026.

David Lynch is one of my favourite artists in all the many fields he created in. From first seeing Twin Peaks in my teens to immensely rewarding and inspiring delvings in later years, my life — and this world — would clearly be immeasurably poorer had he never existed and created.

The approach I selected grew out of the one I had adopted for my Art & Love series. This is a book about David Lynch for readers from all over the world and for all time.

Creating is the coolest thing that we can do.

—David Lynch

AT DAWN: EARLY SHORT STORIES



BY SIMO SAKARI
AALTONEN

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:

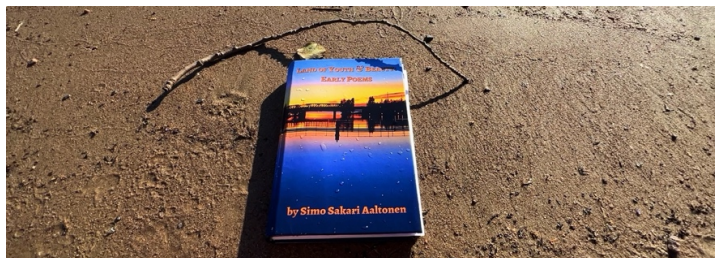
*A marionette's dream, a pair of sonnets, a bayou
tragedy, whirling donuts, nocturnes and nightmares,
encounters in the dark and in sunlit moments...*

*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

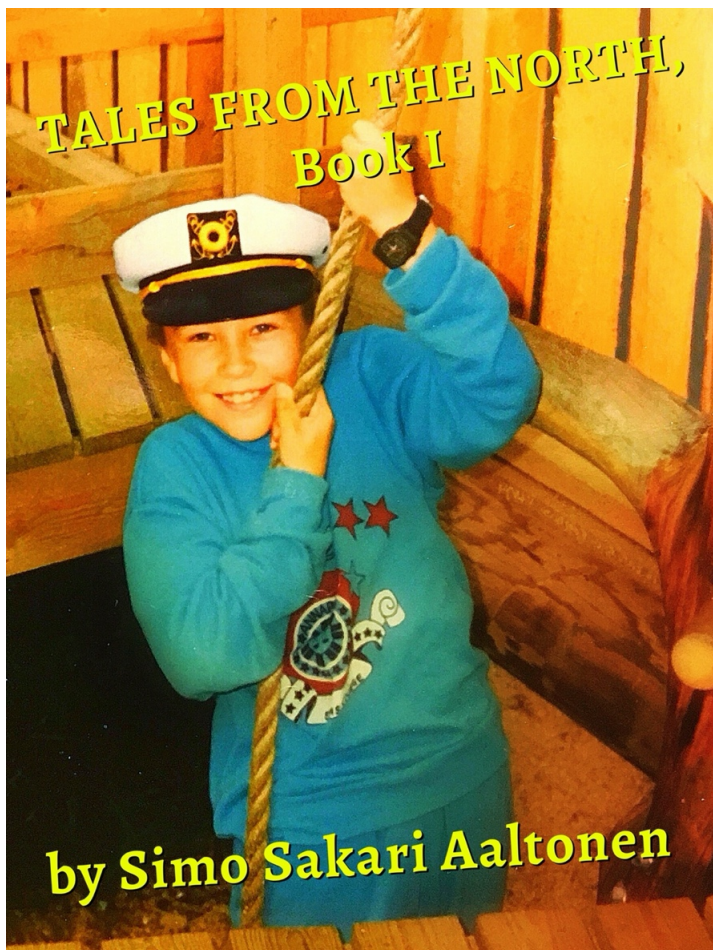
AN ICELAND SYMPHONY, Op. 1
— A Theatrical Symphony for All Ages —
2nd EDITION

XX. Love
(An Iceland Symphony)



by Simo Sakari Aaltonen

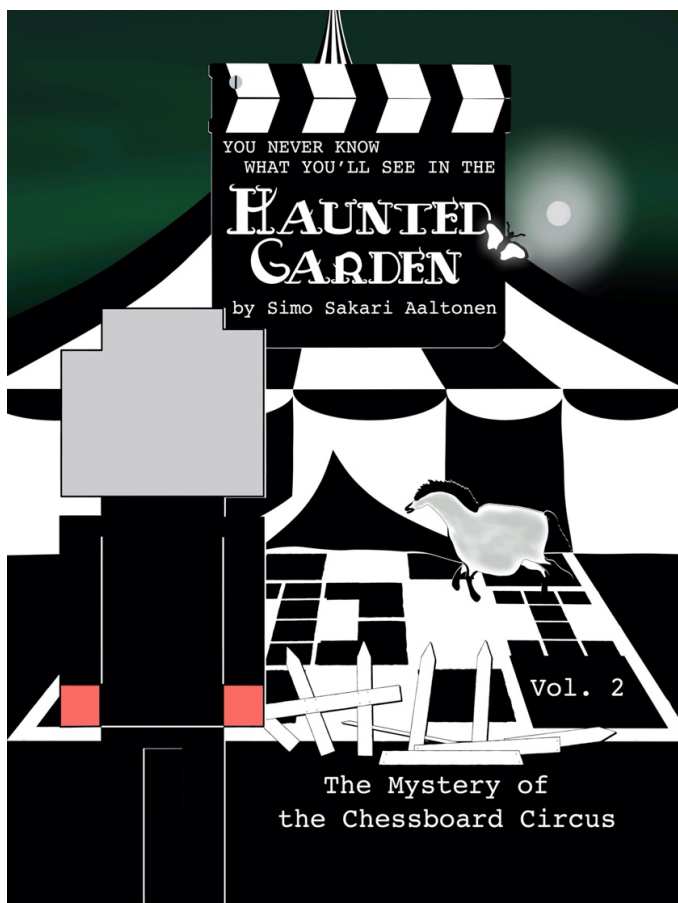
An Iceland Symphony is a musical composition of 21 sections involving theatrical elements. Its performance calls for musicians of all ages from the youngest to the oldest. This book includes the full sheet music complete with performance instructions.



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.

— A WORD-FOR-WORD TRANSCRIPT OF THE 1st SEASON —

This podcast is my central outlet for thoughts, feelings, passing fancies, memories, dreams, appreciations, and more.

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 record every episode extemporaneously, transcribe them afterwards, and eventually collect 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.

This edition of the first season of the podcast brings the more than 40,000 words 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, table-of-contents summaries in the style of old books, and a few footnotes.

Also part of this season are Shakespeare's Sonnet 98 and H. P. Lovecraft's prose poem "Ex Oblivione".

—Simo