

My Home is in my Heart

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää



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Mu Ruoktu lea mu Váimmus

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The reindeer herd.

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Editor's Note

This issue is dedicated to the Sámi people, the Europe's longest surviving indigenous people. They are Lapland natives and live throughout the northern territories of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The most known voice of the Sámi was Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, a multimedia artist that wrote this poem originally published in 1985 in the book *Trackways of the Wind*¹

"A river does not know if it leaves one country and enters another."² And so the reindeers and so the Sámi people. In these times where borders are being questioned for very questioned reasons, reading this poem seems now more appropriate than ever. Its silence and sensivity seems now an almost radical attitude comparing to the current society codes that we are living in. It reminds us in a very accurately way of our small position behind nature, a nature that has no borders and can't be property of no one. We invite everyone to experience the quietness of this poem... no images, only imagination. And thus discover that the only space that can be private is our own heart.

The elaboration of this issue was only possible due to the cooperation of DAT publisher which we would like to thank the generosity by giving us the authorization to re-publish this poem.

¹ *Trackways of the Wind* published in 1994 is an English translation of the book *Ruoktu Váimmus* which was published in 1985. It was translated into English by Ralph Salisbury, Lars Nordström and Harald Gaski.

² Paulo Mendes da Rocha referring to the "Inland navigation", the systems of rivers that extend beyond national borders. In *Kärjäjäkivet* #11, p 15.

*Mu ruoktu lea mu váimmus
ja dat johtá mu mielde*

*Mu ruovttus eallá luohhti
gullo mánáid illudeapmi
Biellut skállet doppe
beatnagat cillet
suohtan njurggasta
Mu ruovttus šlivggodit
láđđegávtti healmmiit
sámi nieiddažiid biddojuolggit
liegga modji*

*Mu ruoktu lea mu váimmus
ja dat johtá mu mielde*

*Don dieđát dan viellja
don ipmirdat oabbá
muhto máid dajan deidda apmasiidda
geat gokčēt dán visot
máid dajan sin jearaldagai'e
geat bohtet eará máilmmis*

*Mot sáhhtá čilget
ahte ii oro gostege
dehege orru gal
muhto mun orun
buohkain dáin duoddariin
ja don čuoččut mu seanggas
mu hivsset lea duoid miestagiid duohkin
beaivi lea mu lámpu
jávri lávgunlihhti*

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää,
Indigenous Voice and
Multimedia Artist

My home is in my heart
it migrates with me

The yoik³ is alive in my home
the happiness of children sounds there
herd-bells ring
dogs bark
the lasso hums
In my home
the fluttering edges of gáktis⁴
the leggings of the Sámi girls
warm smiles

My home is in my heart
it migrates with me

You know it brother
you understand sister
but what do I say to strangers
who spread out everywhere
how shall I answer their questions
that come from a different world

How can I explain
that I cannot live in just one place
and still live
when I live
among all these tundras
You are standing in my bed
my privy is behind the bushes
the sun is my lamp
the lake my wash bowl

³ Traditional Sámi singing. It is usually performed solo, without any accompanying instruments. Yoik was formerly connected with old Sámi religious practices. Another important use of yoik was to uphold myths and stories of the past.

⁴ The colorful Sámi coat.

*Mot čilget
ahte váibmu lea mu ruoktu
ja dat sirdása mu mielde
Mot čilget
ahte doppe orrot maiddái earát
mu vieljat ja oappát*

*Máid mun dajan viellja
máid mun dajan oabbá*

*Dat bohtet
ja jerret gos du ruoktu lea
Dat buktet báhpiriid
ja dadjet
dát ii leat geange
dát lea Riikka eanan
Riikka visot
Dat ohcet assás duolva girjjiid
ja dadjet
dá lea lähka
ja dát guoská dunai*

*Máid mun dajan oabbá
máid mun dajan viellja*

*Don dieđát dan viellja
don ipmirdat oabbá*

*Muhto go dat jerret gos lea du ruoktu
dajatgo don ahte dát visot
Skuolfedievás mii lávostalaimet
giđđajohtolatáigge
Čáppavuomis mis lei goahti ragatáigge
Min geasseorohat lea Ittunjárga
ja dálvet min bovccot leat Dálvadasa
guovlluin*

How can I explain
that it moves with me
How can I explain
that others live there too
my brothers and sisters

What shall I say brother
what shall I say sister

They come
and ask where is your home
they come with papers
and say
this belongs to nobody
this is government land
everything belongs to the State
They bring out dingy fat books
and say
this is the law
it applies to you too

5 Place name meaning
'the owl slope'.

6 The traditional Sámi
'tent' used during the
migration of the reindeer
and is almost identical
in shape to the Plains
Indians teepee. Nowadays,
the lávvu has become
very popular as outdoor
dwelling all year round.

7 Place name meaning
'beautiful forested valley'.

8 The traditional winter
Sámi dwelling, often
dome shaped and
composed of a wooden
frame covered with a
layer of birch bark and
chunks of peat moss.

9 A peninsula in the
Lyngen Fjord; also called
the Reindeer Valley.

10 Place name meaning
'winter grazing land and /
or winter camp site'.

What shall I say sister
what shall I say brother

You know brother
you understand sister

But when they ask where is your home
do you answer them all this
On Skuolfedievá⁵ we pitched our lávvu⁶
during the spring migration
Čáppavuopmi⁷ is where we built our goahti⁸
during rut
Our summer camp is at Ittunjárga⁹
and during the winter our reindeer are in
Dálvadas¹⁰

*Don dieđát dan oabbá
don ipmirdat viellja*

*Min máddarat leat dolastallan Allaorddas
Stuorajeakke balssain
Viiddesčearus
Áddjáróhkki hohkai vuonas guollebivddus
Áhkkováidni lávii suidnet Šelgesrođus
Áhčči riegádii Finjubávtti vuollái boaldi
buollašii*

*Ja vel dat jerret
gos lea du ruoktu*

*Dat bohtet mu lusa
ja čájehit girjjiid
Láhkagirjjiid
maid sii leat ieža čállán
Dá lea láhka ja dát guoská dunai
Geahča*

*Muhto in mun geahča viellja
in geahča oabbá
in jienát maidege
in sáhte
Čájehan fal duoddariidda*

*Ja mun oainnán min duoddariid
min orohagaid
ja gulan váimmu dearpame
dát lea mu ruoktu visot dát
ja mun guottán
dan iežan siste
váimmustan*

*Mun gulan dan
go bijan čalmmiid gitta
mun gulan dan*

You know it sister
you understand brother

Our ancestors kept fires on Allaorda¹¹
on Stuorajeaggis's¹² tufts
in Viiddesčearru¹³
Grandfather drowned in the fjord while fishing
Grandmother cut her shoe grass in Šelgesrohtu¹⁴
Father was born in Finjubákti¹⁵ in burning cold

And still they ask
where is your home

They come to me
and show books
Law books
that they have written themselves
This is the law and it applies to you too
See here

But I do not see brother
I do not see sister
I cannot
I say nothing
I only show them the tundra

I see our fjelds¹⁶
the places we live
and hear my heart beat
all this is my home
and I carry it
within me
in my heart

I can hear it
when I close my eyes
I can hear it

¹¹ Place name meaning 'high timberline'.

¹² Place name meaning 'the large marsh'.

¹³ Place name meaning 'wide mountain'.

¹⁴ Place name meaning 'shining brush forest'.

¹⁵ Place name meaning 'the leaning cliff'.

¹⁶ (Norw.) A rocky, barren plateau of the Scandinavian peninsula.

*Gulan juostá
čietnjalasas iežan siste
eatnama dapmama gulan
duháhiid gaccaid dearpame
ealu ruvgaleame gulan
vuo noaidegárrigo
ja bálvosgeađgi
fuobmán
juostá mu rattis
savkala jienáda huiká čuorvu
gupmamiin báhcá dávistit
ratti ravddas ravdii*

*Ja mun gulan dan
vaikko vel rabašin čalmmiidge
mun gulan*

*Juostá mu siste čietnjalasas
gulan
jiena gohččuma
ja vara juoigama gulan
Čietnjalasas
eallima duogábealde
eallima duogábeallai*

*Dát visot lea mu ruoktu
dát vuonat jogat jávrrit
dát buollašat beaivvážat garradálkkit
Dáid duoddariid ija ja beaivvi bealli
illu ja moraš
oappát ja vieljat
Dát visot lea mu ruoktu
ja mun guottán dan váimmustan*

I hear somewhere
deep within me
I hear the ground thunder
from thousands of hooves
I hear the reindeer herd running
or is it the noaidi¹⁷ drum
and the sacrificial stone
I discover
somewhere within me
I hear sound whisper shout call
with the thunder still echoing
from rib to rib

And I can hear it
even when I open my eyes
I hear it

Somewhere deep within me
I can hear it
a voice calling
and the blood's yoik I hear
In the depths
from the dawn of life
to the dusk of life

All of this is my home
these fjords rivers lakes
the cold the sunlight the storms
The night and day of the fjelds
happiness and sorrow
sisters and brothers
All of this is my home
and I carry it in my heart

¹⁷ Noaidis, often referred to as the "Sámi shamans", are the traditional healers and protectors of the Sami people.

Kärjäkivet is an independent online publishing project of thought and criticism of architecture that was born from an artistic research around the unbuilt Saivaara Monument designed in 1978 by the legendary Finnish artist Tapio Wirkkala for the Saivaara fjeld in Lapland. The publication has been achieving, not in form but in content, the concept of Kärjäkivet that Tapio Wirkkala wanted for the Saivaara Monument: the creation of a place where men of all races and colors can gather to think. In this sense, there is an online platform - www.karajakivet.com - where several invited authors are able to gather through small literary constructions produced by them, sharing their ideas about architecture, art and culture in general, in a sort of modern-day assembly.

Evoking the place that Tapio Wirkkala wanted to create at the top of the Saivaara fjeld, Kärjäkivet meant to be a place of slowness and introspection where to stop, "observe the landscape" that surrounds us and think.



KÄRJÄKIVET

Finnish word meaning “court stones” or “circle of stones”: places of judgment (originally iron age graves), where judgments were held and justice carried out, accordingly to the Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

In the ancient times, they were important places where the primitive leaders of the North got together in order to discuss and decide about common matters.

www.karajakivet.com

Support:



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