

Sample Translation (pp. 13-19, pp. 23-27, pp. 30-47)

SAKARI LEARNS TO WALK THROUGH WALLS

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[...]

SAKARI

Sakari is sitting among the rainbows. The knife blade cools his skin; the voice behind his forehead is silent. He is alone. The people have melted away, flitting shadows behind the wall of water around him.

Fear is a thought, centimetres away, like the water that has closed around him without touching him. Just the occasional inkling of a cool drop on his skin.

He runs the knife along his arms and down his neck. Above him the sun sticks to a hard sky. A boy is standing on the other side of the wall. He is holding an ice cream and staring at him, eyes wide, as if wanting to say something or ask a question.

'Don't be scared,' says Sakari, although the boy doesn't look at all scared, more curious. He looks like fun. The boy looks like a distant memory. He knows him.

'You're really not scared,' says Sakari. 'That's good.'

Not far away, cars pull up. This is unusual: the market square is out of bounds for cars. Scheduled buses are allowed to drive around the sides of the square – blue buses, blue summer sky – but cars are banned.

What are these banned cars doing here? thinks Sakari.

Fear closes in, and the knife blade casually cuts some first narrow wounds in his fingers. He feels nothing. Police officers get out of the cars. They walk quickly towards the wall of water, their arms by their sides. A man and a woman. Sakari likes the uniforms they're wearing. He imagines they feel safe in those uniforms. He feels safe too, behind the wall, naked. He's wearing the uniform of angels.

'Can you hear me?'

One of the police officers said that. The man.

'Can you hear me?'

Sakari watches the man through the water.

'Please come out of there and put your clothes on,' the policeman says.

Sakari says nothing because the voice behind his forehead has suddenly become very loud indeed. The voice behind his forehead gives warnings so quickly that he can hardly keep up.

'Can you hear me? I order you to come out. Put down the knife.'

More vehicles draw up in the background. The woman – the policewoman – has taken the boy with the ice cream by the hand. The two of them walk away fast. Sakari feels a stab in the back of his neck.

The voice behind his forehead would like the boy to stay. I know you, boy, he thinks, and the sentence begins to go round and round in circles. I know, you, you are blessed, you have to stay, you have no fear.

PETRI

When Petri Grönholm arrives he sees a policeman standing by the fountain, a policewoman leading a boy away, and as he gets out of the car another patrol car drives up and stops abruptly. Three people in uniform get out. He knows one of them, Markku Persson.

‘Hey, Petri,’ says Persson, striding towards him. ‘They called us out. What exactly’s going on?’

Grönholm hesitates for a second. The air before his eyes has started to shimmer. The uniformed officers, Persson’s colleagues, are already walking towards the scene with a spring in their step, almost at a saunter, but alert nonetheless. The square is empty. Shoppers are standing around the edges, a silent audience.

‘A naked man in the water. Apparently he’s got a knife.’

‘OK,’ says Persson.

He walks along beside Persson. Through the shimmer around his eyes he sees the boy, nibbling at his ice cream, lost in thought. What’s are you thinking about, boy, Grönholm thinks hazily.

‘Shit. Who is this guy?’ says Persson, and Grönholm follows his gaze, glimpsing the man’s silhouette through the small, glittering waterfalls. The man is sitting between the water features, surrounded by rainbows, running a knife calmly and patiently up and down his arms.

In the background, through the water, beyond the flickering edges that are reducing his field of vision, Petri Grönholm can see the window of his flat. Above it, bright sky. I’ll soon be home, he thinks, as he fidgets with his service weapon with a shaking hand.

SAKARI

A wall is growing behind the wall. A wall of people behind the wall of water. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Six are in uniform. One is in civilian clothing, a black jacket that isn't really appropriate for today. A fat, black blob in the summer, and it's approaching far too fast.

Away, he thinks. Away. Away from me.

The black blob is standing opposite him, flanked by two blue-and-white uniforms, sneaking up, on their guard.

Don't be scared, Sakari thinks. No need to worry. I'm here. No need to worry.

'Put the knife down,' says the black blob.

Why don't you melt, black man! Sakari thinks. Why don't you drip to the ground, mingle with the water and trickle away?

PETRI

Through the shimmering that is spraying into his eyes, he sees the balcony of his flat and the window. The sun is reflected in the window. For a second he thinks he can see himself standing on the balcony, contemplating the scene from a safe distance.

Then he feels himself again. He has never felt his legs planted so firmly on level ground. His hand clutches the handle of the gun. His eyes seek out the other man's amid the rainbows. He can feel the eyes of the boy with the ice cream boring into his back. The boy is desperate to run to the fountains and, laughing, stretch out his hands towards them.

In a minute, thinks Petri Grönholm. In a minute.

He finds the naked man's eyes and feels as if he's entering a tunnel. The man's eyes are black and they look right through him and off into a mysterious distance.

In a minute, he thinks. Everything'll be back to normal in a minute.

'Knife down.'

The blood that the naked man is scraping from his arms, only a few metres away, drips to the ground, mingles with the water and trickles away.

SAKARI

They don't recognise him. They don't know who he is, don't know why he's here and don't know what to do. How's he meant to open these people's eyes, how's he meant to transform their guilt into courage if they're blind?

Angel, he says.

Knife, the other man says.

I'm . . . an angel.

No, you're not. Stop cutting yourself.

Can't you see that I've come to wash your guilt from my skin? thinks Sakari.

Put the knife down and come out.

The black man behind the wall of water is moving quickly closer.

Let me . . .

One stride, then another, then the man crosses the threshold and is standing between the walls, with one leg in the space that belongs entirely to Sakari.

. . . just let me . . .

The man points a gun at him, at the place where his heart is beating.

. . . just let me be an angel.

PETRI

He's standing in the middle. In the middle of his world, not far from home. He stands the way he's been taught. The gun in his hand is an extension of his arm. His arm is horizontal in the air. His finger on the trigger doesn't shake. Only his hand does. And his legs. The words he's speaking shimmer in space, hovering, coming adrift of one another and evaporating into letters. The water patters softly. Did the naked man say *angel*?

'Toss the knife away. Now.'

The naked man stands up, suddenly, in a movement that seems both jerky and fluid to Petri Grönholm. The man is tall and slim and stands bowed, with hunched shoulders, clutching the knife in one hand, and he says something Grönholm doesn't understand. Then he's only an instant away, and that instant stands still. It's a painting.

The painting shows him, Petri, in the middle of his own world, not far from home. Only this one instant away, frozen in a practised movement.

Then time begins to flow again, and the energy and power that Petri Grönholm uses, courses through his body with incredible force before reaching his fingertip, which fires the first shot.

[...]

[...]

KIMMO

Kimmo Joentaa carries the steaming pot out to the old wooden table on the jetty under the scorching sun and scans the smooth blue surface of the lake, which lies motionless under the sky. He waits.

He's cooked pasta, spaghetti, with a tomato sauce Sanna absolutely loves. In fact, she refuses even to touch any other sauce and thinks her father is the world's best cook, although Kimmo Joentaa invented this sauce on an obviously lucky whim simply by mixing tomato concentrate with water and adding a pinch of stock powder.

The lake lies calm in the sunshine. Then the girls surface, first Marisa and, a few seconds later, Sanna.

'I was underwater longer!' she cries.

Marisa laughs.

'Again!' shouts Sanna, and Kimmo Joentaa watches the two of them, his daughter Sanna and her friend Marisa, slip under the water. First Sanna, then Marisa. It goes quiet again.

Kimmo Joentaa sets the pot down on the table, adjusts the plates and glasses and takes a few paces towards the house. As he walks he has to stop himself from turning around and scanning the water for any barely perceptible disturbance. He counts the seconds.

He's almost reached the top of the slope when behind him giggles shatter the silence.

He feels a smile come over his face as the girls argue over who stayed underwater longer this time, and he goes jauntily into the house to fetch the pot of sauce.

PETRI

Petri Grönholm sits in his car under the blue sky and the blazing sun. His right arm rests limply on the passenger seat. His eyes survey the space beyond the windscreen.

Standing off to the right, in a cluster of people, is the boy who was eating ice cream when it all began, when he arrived without a clue of what awaited him. The boy's arms are hanging limply too, as if detached from his body, and

his mouth is slightly open. Next to the boy Grönholm sees trampled remnants of his ice-cream cone.

Two uniformed policewomen are trying to push the boy and the other bystanders back. Further back, thinks Grönholm. Good. Away from there.

The empty space around the fountains grows as he watches, and on the ground in the middle of the wide-open area lies the naked man, flanked by three paramedics who won't be able to help him now. That's the only thing he knows with any certainty. Persson walks towards him with rapid yet controlled strides. He taps on the driver's window. Grönholm opens it.

'Your gun,' says Persson.

He looks quizzically at him.

'Give me your gun,' says Persson.

Of course, he thinks. He gropes for the gun on the passenger seat, picks it up, feels its leaden weight in his hand and passes it to Persson.

'Everything okay, Petri?' asks Persson.

'Yeah. Sure,' he says.

Persson nods and walks away. He watches him go, then lets his gaze pan from Persson to the clothes and shoes lying at the edge of the scene. The clothes are in a tidy pile. The shoes gleam dark-blue in the sunlight.

His gaze shifts back and forth between the man on the ground and the clothes to one side, and he shuts his eyes. There are several things he doesn't understand. A question hangs in the air. He reaches for it but cannot grasp it.

He imagines the man getting to his feet. He patiently pulls on his clothes and puts on his shoes. He walks away, upright and relaxed.

Nothing happened.

Grönholm will buy the boy another ice cream, and the man will walk away in his gleaming shoes, leave the empty space behind, and head for an unknown destination without ever looking back.

KIMMO

Paula, one of the neighbourhood kids, has come out to play. She brings along an idea for a game to which the girls immediately agree, and Kimmo Joentaa casts sideways glances at the three of them as he refills their glasses with apple juice or cold milk. Sanna, Marisa and Paula are standing on the jetty, smiling, motionless, struggling to control their desire to move, as if they've suddenly been rooted to the spot.

He tries to make out what game the girls are playing, but once more it eludes his understanding. It must be something like cops and robbers, as Sanna called out that she wanted to be a cop first because her dad was a policeman.

‘Hey, how about some ice cream?’ Kimmo Joentaa calls, but the girls don’t react.

‘Not now, Dad,’ says Sanna.

‘Oh, I’m sorry,’ says Joentaa. He studies Sanna, who seems to be thinking hard about something while her friends watch her very closely. Marisa and Paula are concentrating hard on standing as still as statues beside the calm dark-blue surface of the lake.

‘You!’ Sanna suddenly shouts with a peal of laughter. ‘You’re the robber, Marisa. You moved!’

Now they’re all laughing and, relaxing their arms and legs, they snap out of their paralysis. ‘Phew, you took your time, Sanna!’ says Paula.

‘No I didn’t,’ says Sanna.

‘Ice cream!’ cries Marisa.

‘Another swim first, though,’ says Sanna, already sprinting along the jetty before leaping high and far out into the water. The others follow suit, with Marisa trying to outjump Sanna, Paula trying to outjump Marisa, and a debate flares up in the water about who jumped the highest.

‘You jump in too, Dad!’ calls Sanna. ‘As high as you can.’

‘Soon, but I’ll fetch the ice cream first,’ calls Joentaa.

‘OK,’ shouts Sanna. ‘But we have to find my set square too.’

‘Um . . . why?’ asks Joentaa.

‘Marisa said she wanted to measure the moon. Later tonight, I mean.’

[...]

[...]

KIMMO

That evening the girls play a game on the tablet. The three of them sit on the jetty with their feet dangling in the water, totally focused on the small flickering rectangle while above their heads a red sun merges into the dark-blue waters of the lake in a potential sign of what the next day holds.

‘What are you playing?’ Joentaa calls.

Sitting at the table in his swimming trunks and a T-shirt, he catches the recurring, tinny strains of a lively tune issuing from the device on a loop – a jaunty, jokey little song. The girls sway in time to the music as they run their fingertips over the display in practised movements.

‘It’s a kind of zombie game. . . You’ve got to jump over the trains,’ says Sanna.

‘Oooh, sounds kind of . . . scary,’ he says.

‘No, Dad. These are good zombies. Well, nice zombies.’

‘Oh, right,’ says Joentaa.

Good zombies. Happy living dead people, who might be grateful for the dubious gift of eternal life. Just as he’s thinking that the girls will miss the sunset, Sanna calls out, ‘Oh, look how red the sun is!’

‘Ooh!’ says Marisa.

‘Or is it the moon?’ asks Sanna.

‘You’ve been run over by a train, sillybilly,’ says Paula.

‘Kimmo?’ The voice comes from behind Joentaa. A familiar voice that sounds somehow different. He turns around, still smiling about the girls. ‘Petri,’ he says.

‘I hope I’m not disturbing you,’ says Grönholm.

‘Of course not.’

Grönholm stands a few metres away in the evening sun under the reddish-blue sky. He seems to be considering if should come closer or stay where he is. Joentaa follows his gaze. Petri is studying the jumble of pots of pasta and sauce and bowls of half-finished ice cream on the table.

‘Fancy some ice cream?’ Joentaa asks.

‘Kimmo, I know you’re still on holiday, but . . . you have to explain something to me. That man . . . I think he was a child.’

Joentaa tries to meet Grönholm's eyes, which are roaming restlessly this way and that.

'Which man?' Joentaa asks.

'The man I shot dead. He's virtually a child. A boy,' says Grönholm.

DAVID

He's walking, leaving the town behind him, a taste of melon lingering on his tongue.

He decided on a scoop of melon ice cream. The girl who handed him the cone smiled, and as he began to eat the ice cream and feel the taste on his tongue, the strange sweetness of it, he wondered why. Why melon ice cream? He'd never eaten melon ice cream before.

Then his thought had been cut off, as if by a pair of scissors, because he had caught a woman's astonished expression and followed her gaze to the water, to the small waterfalls that had been swirling in the blue air on the market square for the past weeks. And there, flickering among the spiralling jets of water, somehow unreal, as if in a video clip or game, the naked man had stood. David had immediately spotted the knife in his hand and walked towards him, and as he approached he saw that the man was actually a boy. A man who was a boy but those big, questioning eyes made him look more like a child.

David saw the boy's eyes the moment the shot went off. A shudder ran through the policewoman who had led him away from the fountain. The policewoman's knees turned to jelly, and David even instinctively stuck out a hand to prop her up if she fell. But no, the policewoman had steadied herself, suddenly stood up straight and strode over to the fountain.

The boy was lying there on the ground, naked. Defenceless. The cascades above him evaporating into the hot air like illusions, never touching the ground. The gunman, a tall policeman wearing a far-too-warm black jacket, had lowered his arm and taken a few steps backward towards David, staggering slightly.

David wondered why the policeman was staggering. If it was the recoil from the shot that made him stagger, or something else.

The words are still there. David can hear them. The taste on his tongue is sweet. Melon. Even though he finished the ice cream long ago and part of the cone fell on the ground. And the words keep coming back, echoing insistently as soon as he's reached the end of one thought and is still searching for a new one.

‘Don’t be scared. You’re really not scared. That’s good.’

That’s what he said. David hears the words as they appear to dance on the roaring water. He hears the words and he hears the strange, familiar, naked dead boy’s voice.

PETRI

His hands shake as they glide over the keys of the laptop he’s put down on the table in Kimmo Joentaa’s small living room, which is flooded with evening sunlight. Through the open French windows Petri Grönholm can see the girls – Kimmo Joentaa’s daughter Sanna and her friends – chasing each other and jumping into the lake and then getting out again and running around, shaking off the water as if it were something fleeting, annoying, beautiful.

He types his name, which feels strange to his fingertips: petrigrönholm.mail.fi. He logs on, his password is *summertime*, and Kimmo Joentaa sits next to him, unmoving, looking at him, completely calm even though Petri told him only a few minutes ago that he’d shot a man dead. A boy, a child.

‘Here,’ he says. ‘This is his Facebook page.’

Kimmo Joentaa leans forward and studies the photo of the laughing boy. Sakari Ekman. Grönholm wants to say something, but he can’t. That’s a different boy, he thinks. In the fountain, under the spraying water, it was a different boy. Kimmo studies the photo and begins to read what Grönholm has already read. Scant information. Scant, but sufficient.

Sakari Ekman. In brackets below the name it says, *Profession: Angel*. A little further down: *No interests to report*. Works for: Transatlantic Travel. Underneath that, in small type: *Sole occupant of Cloud Flatshare, Apartment 34, Turuntie 121*.

Petri Grönholm immediately saved the address. It was unusual, completely out of the ordinary for someone to give their street name and house number. That’s what makes him so certain it’s correct. The Cloud Flatshare – whatever that might be – is indeed at Turuntie 121. He wanted to drive over there, but then couldn’t face it, turned off halfway and drove out of town, accelerating fast. All of a sudden he knew where he had to go. To Kimmo Joentaa, to the small house by the lake and now, sitting next to him, he knows his hunch was right.

‘Turuntie 121,’ Joentaa mumbles.

His eyes slide to the right and Grönholm follows them to the picture occupying the right-hand half of the screen. The page was last updated only a few days back. Sakari Ekman had uploaded a picture. A painting. Blue water beneath an even bluer sky. The subtlest of differences between the shades of colour, one half sea, one half sky, with the horizon as the dividing line. Stray white clouds cling to the sky. Nobody has commented on the picture. Nobody has added an appreciative or sympathetic tick. Nobody has liked the picture. Grönholm likes it.

‘Can you drive over there?’ he asks.

Joentaa turns to look at him. Grönholm cannot make out if his expression is a question or an answer. Outside, the girls are chasing each other without gaining any ground until they collapse onto the lawn from exhaustion.

‘Draw,’ one of them calls out.

‘We all won,’ cries another.

‘I’ll do it,’ says Joentaa.

‘Huh?’ asks Grönholm.

‘I’ll drive over there,’ says Kimmo Joentaa. ‘But first I’m going to get the mattresses ready for the girls. Sanna’s having a sleepover tonight. And you have to calm down too, Petri. You take the bedroom.’

KIMMO

While Joentaa is laying out the mattresses and putting covers on the duvets and pillows in Sanna’s room, he hears the tap-tap of Petri’s fingers as they dart across the laptop screen. He wonders what questions Petri is looking at. And what answers he will find.

Imperceptibly, it has got a little darker outside, as the evening begins to give way to a dusky, warm night. There’s not a sound from the girls.

Joentaa goes over to the window and sees the three of them sitting next to each other on the jetty. Sanna is holding the tablet so that the others can see. They’ve settled down, exhausted and absorbed – as absorbed as Petri Grönholm in the living room but for different reasons, setting out for different objectives in the virtual cosmos, at the mercy of different impulses, in search of different certainties.

When everything’s ready in Sanna’s room he goes outside to tell the girls that he’s going to drive into town again. ‘I’ll be back soon, and my colleague Petri is staying the night too. He’s inside if you need anything.’

‘Okay, Dad,’ says Sanna without raising her eyes from the game they’re playing. Good zombies.

‘See you soon, you three,’ says Joentaa. ‘And if tiredness suddenly hits you, the beds are made.’

‘No, no, we want to measure the moon,’ says Sanna. ‘It’s isn’t quite round yet, and it has to get a bit darker. We’re going to stay up until morning anyway.’

‘Oh really?’ says Joentaa with a grin. He looks at the three of them for a little longer and has a vague go at figuring out what is flickering on the screen and commanding their undivided attention.

‘Aargh! Crashed!’ cries Marisa, and Kimmo Joentaa walks back up the slope to his car and gets in.

Driving along, he tries to imagine what he’s likely to find. And why on earth Sakari Ekman, the sole occupant, called his home Cloud Flatshare.

PETRI

Calm down. That’s what Kimmo said. Petri Grönholm reads the news on a tabloid newspaper’s website. He circles it, considering it from several angles. It doesn’t have the right news or the right angle.

The tabloid has used the photo on the Facebook page. There’s a black bar hiding Sakari Ekman’s eyes. The laughter at the corners of his mouth looks oddly lonely without the eyes. Under the Facebook photo is a large, strangely blurred photo of the fountain with the small waterfalls, and in the fountain the silhouette of a tall, naked man. Was the boy really that tall? He’s frozen in movement. The knife a narrow stripe, circled in red, on a bent arm. *What drove the naked knifeman?* the headline wonders.

The knifeman. Surrounded by uniforms. At the extreme right of the picture a black blob with an unidentifiable face and a shapeless, broad, bloated-looking body. Petri Grönholm instinctively looks himself up and down. Is that him? Is that his stout body in a blurring picture? Is that his outstretched arm? The gun is circled in red.

A police spokesperson gave the following comment after enquiries by our newspaper: ‘The officer approached to protect the man from further self-inflicted wounds.’ An investigation is underway into the precise circumstances of the man’s death. The officer is currently the prime suspect. However, according to a spokesperson for the state prosecutor’s office, there is ample evidence that he was acting in self-defence or to defend a third party.

Beyond the glass, out on the jetty, the girls are sitting under the sky. The sky is orange and pink. The surface of the lake looks like blue asphalt you could run across.

A play button invites Petri Grönholm to start the video. *Passer-by films horror scene on Turku market square. Click [HERE](#).*

Just one click away.

His hand doesn't move from the desk. It puts off a moment that is already far in the past.

DAVID

At home that evening he is alone. The dead boy's voice and the roaring water have fallen silent.

He is sitting in the white living room on the large sofa in front of the low glass table opposite the wide yellow-and-blue painting, hanging on the snow-white wall. He likes the painting's soft, pale colours. A field in summer, a yellow meadow. It's a hot day in the picture, like today. Pale colours that seem to evaporate as David studies the painting. Disappearing colours: they dissolve in the eye of the beholder, like the water swirling through the air on the market square.

His eyes wander off to one side, to the gold-lit pool in the large, green garden. But it's impossible to make out the green; the green has faded like the colours in the painting. It's as dark as it ever gets in summer, and Mum is sitting at the computer up in Emma's room. David cannot see her, of course, but he knows that Mum is sitting at the computer, looking for pictures of Emma.

Erik is sitting on the floor, engrossed in the game he's playing with his small, brightly coloured cars. Erik pushes the cars towards each other at speed. There's a wild glint in his eye as he does this. He looks pretty weird, and David notices how Erik always avoids a collision between the cars at the last moment. The two cars stand there, unscathed, one green, one red. Erik lets go of them both. Nothing happened. He turns around and smiles at David.

'David?' Mum calls from upstairs. Her voice sounds strangely quiet, a whisper. Only Mum can do that – call in a whisper. 'David?'

'Yes, I'm coming,' calls David. He can feel Erik's eyes on his back as he goes up the stairs. He already knows what Mum's going to ask him. She's going to ask him if he can help her.

'David, can you help me? I can't find Emma's pictures.'

Emma's pictures.

'Do you mean the Instagram pictures we put on the memorial website?' he asks.

'Yes, yes, that's right,' she says. She seems absent, her eyes fixed on the screen, on a distant point in the centre of the screen that only she can see. 'I can't remember how to get there,' she says.

The way to Emma is blocked. David knows the way. Not to Emma, but to the pictures. He types in the address and the password, opens the page, looks at Emma. Emma's smile. Mum says nothing as she leans forward. She breathes in and out and begins to click on the pictures with a trembling hand.

David goes downstairs again. Halfway down the stairs he stops. A sudden pain shoots through him when he sees Erik; a wave of warmth flows through his body. Erik is holding a small motorbike in his hand. A motorbike soft toy with a face. A cheerful motorbike.

Erik is smiling, and the motorbike is smiling too. It's driving along an invisible road. Unbothered, carefree. All because that's what Erik, his little four-year-old brother, wants.

LEENA

Pictures of Emma.

Her gaze plunges into them until it's rejected, like a foreign body that cannot be reconciled with the pictures. She seeks out Emma's eyes and Emma's smile, even though she knows that she cannot cope with her eyes and smile. She looks away and back again, and Emma stays where she is – infinitely few centimetres away.

The photos tell stories. Emma's fifteenth birthday, a few months before her last summer. The cake they baked together. How they laughed. A cake spilling over with liquid chocolate. Emma made the icing, ignoring Leena's instructions about boiling the water until it spilled over and putting in too much icing sugar. The cake tasted really good; Leena can almost taste it on her tongue. Always add more chocolate, she thinks.

On some pictures Emma is singing at the school concert in the open-air theatre, surrounded by lush green grass beneath a radiant sun. Leena remembers what she was thinking as she sat entranced in the audience, her hands shaking. That everybody would again see the loud, radiant Emma, trusting in her voice and shedding all reticence.

She wonders if anyone ever knew the other Emma, the reticent, doubting, thoughtful Emma. No, of course not. Not even Stefan had seen that one. No, him least of all. Only she had appreciated Emma in all her facets, and now she sees herself sitting in the audience at the school concert and she can sense the joy she felt at the sight of her daughter singing without inhibitions.

'Respect,' suntanned Stefan had said during the surge of applause, sporting his characteristically broad grin. The obligatory pair of sunglasses hung from the collar of his white summer shirt.

David was sitting next to Stefan, quiet and proud of his big sister. At some point in the first few weeks, while what had happened was still floating in the air like pieces of a jigsaw, intangible, incomprehensible, Leena thought that she ought actually to be there for David, that she ought to pull herself together, that everything would return to normal. Then she sensed that it wasn't possible, wasn't conceivable because she couldn't find the strength.

In a matter of days David became an adult and as he stands beside her today, eleven years old, explaining to her how to find pictures of Emma and access the memorial page, she feels a bit of a child.

Since Emma's last summer she hasn't seen David laugh heartily, not happy, relaxed or genuine. Not once. And she's noticed in the past few weeks that he doesn't ask any more when Dad is coming home.

KIMMO

The Cloud Flatshare is an apartment in a broad-fronted white house from which music and muffled laughter are issuing when Joentaa arrives. *Day-care centre for outpatients* it says on a small plaque next to the entrance.

The front door opens at a push, and seconds after Kimmo Joentaa enters the staircase, a bright neon light flickers on. The hallways are wide and long. The music and laughter are coming from a room on the ground floor. There's a floor plan on an otherwise bare wall, showing the numbers of the apartments. Number 34 must be higher up, on the third floor. At cloud height, thinks Joentaa as he walks up the stairs.

The laughter and the music fade away, and it's completely silent by the time he reaches the third floor. The neon light has gone out. He walks along the empty hallway, past 30, 31, 32 and 33, whose doors are shut.

The door to 34, the Cloud Flatshare, is wide open. A piece of paper is stuck to the door. Painstaking, delicate letters spell the word *Welcome*.

He enters the room, which is dark but then flooded with stark, bright light when Joentaa finds the switch. His first thought is that this is the home of the sea. And of the clouds, of course.

The canvases propped up against the walls are dark and light blue, in a variety of formats and sizes. Dark water, lighter sky, small white clouds hanging lost in the sky, and the four walls enclosing the room also offer a vista of sky, sea and clouds. The wallpaper is one big painting, mirroring or complementing, completing the smaller paintings on the canvases.

Four walls of bright blue sky and dark blue sea, and lonely white clouds on the ceiling. The laminate on the floor is dark blue, the colour of water, the colour of the walls, the colour of the mattress lying in the middle of the room. On top of the mattress are a light-blue pillow and a sky-blue duvet.

Around the edges of the room are boxes, piled neatly on top of one another. Joentaa walks over to them. He carefully lifts some of the lids and after only a few seconds he feels the alien colours stinging his eyes: yellow, red, light green, toys, ripped T-shirts, tangled cables, an old beige telephone, used batteries, a shimmering pink MP3 player, empty beer and wine bottles, brightly coloured soft toys with big eyes. Dazzlingly garish odds and ends.

Joentaa shuts the boxes, puts them back where they were, at right-angles to one another so that they form a perfect square. Now the boxes are floating quietly in the water again, he thinks. Everything is blue again. Only the clouds are white.

No, there's still something white, on the right-hand wall, half hidden by the boxes. The forms only crystallise when Joentaa takes a few steps closer. There are letters, between sky and water, merging into the dividing line, the horizon. The alphabet, but in a different order. The A is at the beginning, the Z at the end, but between them everything is jumbled up – or at last in its proper order. Sakari has inserted thin numbers and lines into the letters. Lengths and breadths. The length is eight, the breadth two.

And Marisa would like to measure the moon, thinks Joentaa. Later, though, when night is at its peak. Joentaa wonders if Sanna has found the set square, and if Petri Grönholm is asleep.

PETRI

Petri Grönholm is sitting on the sofa in front of flickering images.

A film in which he plays the leading role. The supporting role is played by the naked man. The naked boy. It is set at the fountain with the water jets on

Turku market square. Petri's eyes scan the edges of the image, searching for the other boy who was holding an ice cream in his hand.

He's paused the images, frozen the moment. The naked man is standing a few metres away from the black blob, which seems to divide the image in two. That black blob, in the centre of the picture, is him, a black blob in a bright, dazzlingly sunny moment. It's summer, and the naked man might simply have obeyed a sudden urge, a whim, to go swimming, to feel the cool water on his skin. The man's arms are bent, and he's standing there with more questions than demands. The knife in his hand is a shadow, a vague intuition. It's pointing downwards.

Petri Grönholm would like to find the boy. A few times he thought he'd found him, but he's never sure. The boy remains a silhouette. He might be on the right-hand or left-hand edge of the picture. It's hard to get his bearings. It's still unclear from which angle the video was shot, and the people on the edges of the picture blur into one another.

He lets the film run, step by step, pausing it again and again with a touch of his finger. The black man – himself – stands with his legs akimbo, one arm outstretched; the naked man stands there questioningly, expectantly, hunched, on his guard. Then both of them take a step forward, first the black man, then the white, naked man. The white, naked man raises his arm. He seems to be driven forward by a sudden burst of anger.

What do you want from me? the white man seems to be asking.

What do I want from you? thinks Grönholm.

He pauses the instant again.

Next to the image Grönholm reads something that he might otherwise like and, what is more, might even interest him. *Related videos*.

He opens a new window, a new picture, a new film, a golden-lit night, blue and red lights, police sirens, then a chubby policeman in uniform fires some shots – one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. A thin, dark-skinned man crumples to the ground and doesn't move as the shots thud into his body.

Related videos. Petri Grönholm opens a new window. A new film: *US cop killing seventeen-year-old in Oklahoma*. A camera pitching forwards and backwards in someone's shaking hands, a film set in a quiet summer, on an empty path, with low houses bathed in sunlight in the background. Petri Grönholm thinks that the path might lead down to a beach, to a sandy or stony beach, and the boy walks, then begins to run, towards the shore. The man in uniform on the right of the picture looks very calm and relaxed but at the same time purposeful, as if the moment he's been waiting for for so long has finally come. He draws his gun, raises his arm and starts to shoot. Once, twice, three

times, four times, five times, six times... The boy's running and keeps running, even though he was hit long ago, fatally hit. Petri Grönholm can see that. He sees a boy running although he must have died seconds ago. Only the final shot the man in uniform fires as he strolls towards the body on the ground brings no further reaction from the boy.

Petri Grönholm closes the window and goes back to the other picture, his image, to the black, out-of-focus blob that is him.

The image stops. Pause. Both of them are still breathing, both are still alive – the white man and the black man. Sakari Ekman and himself, facing each other.

[END OF SAMPLE]