

Translated from Finnish

February 10, 2014

Sanna Lintunen, BA

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Ukri Review Service/Kari Tahvanainen 15 October 2010

**Eelis Laine**

***Broken Angel* (Särkyntä enkeli)**

**Manuscript of a collection of short stories 2 August 2010**

The *Broken Angel* manuscript makes an interesting read. The collection moves on personal and societal levels, addressing current problems such as violence, the downsides of economic and working life, and medicalisation. At the same time, it is a story about writing and searching for the truth.

The reader should prepare for a meandering journey. The collection consists of three parts that initially seem very different. The first part, *Heavy Words*, includes essays on current issues, along with philosophical and other ideas emerged as a result of writing the collection, and letters to family. The last text in the first part, the *Miniature System*, is a kind of a travelogue of an eco-village. Stylistically, it is a fitting end to the collection. The first-person narrator is at the base level, at the root of the society, and the story is fairly well controlled.

The second part, *Sound of Life* includes short stories of different styles, along with an obituary (which in itself contains the material for a short novel). *Anti-Christmas* is a light and refreshingly different Christmas story. *Encounter* is connected to the Bodom story in the first part. It takes the reader back to the Lake Bodom murder case. With the intelligence-cell perspective, the story is similar to the spirit of the thrillers by Ilkka Remes. This is probably why the characters remain somewhat paper-like.

*Invisible Obstacle* is a story of the rocky road of an IT professional, also briefly visiting the working community within the gigantic Nokia. The short story provides an interesting view of the hectic IT sector that has, during the crazy years, produced countless young pensioners – professionals burnt out in the economic whirlpool. Interwoven in the story, is another story of a student trying to find a place to enlarge the holes in weightlifting plates. The author is rather skilful in describing the life and social order of both Nokia and the small shops. A little added dramatisation would have made the story even better. It would have added substance to the monotonous monologue.

The last story in the second part, *The Best Laugh*, is a fundamental description of the unexpected moments of joy or inspiration. An e-mail message from a complete stranger telling their story is connected to the first-person narrator's ponderings on love and the truth. A good narrative solution.

The third part of the collection consists of correspondence between the author and a few of his significant commentators. Authors often write a journal to air their brains after writing professionally. Such journals by Finnish authors have been published in a collection titled *Ihmisen ääni*. Writing letters seems to serve a similar purpose here, along with seeking comments for the book-writing project.

Initially, this section with the letters seemed a little strange, but in the end I think it fits the collection well. The author also comments on the reviews provided by review services. Reflection on the most suitable way of writing continues.

Sum summarum

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As I read the book I pondered on the genre. A collection of short stories? A collection of essays? An epistolary novel? An author's diary? The book certainly has elements of all of them. Recently, essayistic literature has been in the forefront in Finland, with authors like Tommi Melender and Timo Hännikäinen. And the grand old man, Matti Mäkelä. In my opinion, this book is best viewed as a collection of essays. This man has a message, it is clear from his philosophical reflections. Perhaps his writing should take a clear step towards essayistic writing in the future. The first-person narrator also works best in essays.

From the perspective of pure fiction I felt that the first-person narrator was not the best solution. Secondly, the stories would benefit from dramatisation; added culmination points and suspense to leave the reader wondering.

Kari Tahvanainen  
Ukri Review Service  
Sepänkatu 49 A 8  
80100 Joensuu  
+358 50 356 1903  
[kartsa.tahvanainen@gmail.com](mailto:kartsa.tahvanainen@gmail.com)

PS. Self-publication should not be ignored as a way of publishing books. If you feel that your work is finished and you have something to say then it is important to make the book available.

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Sanna Lintunen  
Kreetantie 7 D 39  
33950 Pirkkala  
Finland

Email: [kaantokulma@kolumbus.fi](mailto:kaantokulma@kolumbus.fi)  
Tel. +358 45 2300 804  
[www.kaantokulma.net](http://www.kaantokulma.net)