

Eelis Laine: Muuttolinnun muistelmat
Feedback

"Muuttolinnun muistelmat" (Memoirs of a Migrating Bird) is a collection of writings, including daily journalism, columns and other short pieces. Putting together a collection is a nice thought. It shows respect for journalistic work, where painstakingly drafted stories often end up as the next day's fish wrappers.

The collection has a problem early on; newspaper stories are meant to be topical pieces that only scratch the surface, not works meant to stand the test of time. The best way to explain collecting the stories into book form would be for the writer to provide forewords for each story, connecting them to the overall topic/time period. The nature of the collection could be made explicit all the way to its name and table of contents. The original time of publication could also be indicated. The part of the foreword that states the collection is text-only should also be changed, since the collection features pictures as well!

The waypoints could also be specifically named after the place or topic, e.g. Sastamala, Thailand, Sicily, Spiritual growth, etc. The structure works well in the sense that it starts near and moves farther and from lighter topics to more serious ones. More attention should be paid to differentiating between types of texts, such as lead paragraphs and body texts. Furthermore, brief introductory comments would go well with especially the stories near the beginning, such as here: Libraries in Thailand need only to provide an empty hall for young people to ensure their popularity.

The language is good, easily readable general language. There were some grammatical errors with the use of commas. I had trouble grasping the overall idea of the surveys. By the way, it should be checked whether copyright laws permit the use of interview answers or pictures of interviewees from e.g. street surveys without requesting a separate permission to reuse such material. I cannot answer this myself without researching the matter.

The internet links also seemed to divert one's attention away from the stories' topics. Longer addresses especially do not fit into a printed book. This would of course be different if the book was published electronically. At worst, the links leave a sloppy impression: the point of the story is not stated clearly and the reader needs to browse the internet to find it. Links are fine to help in searching for additional information on interesting topics.

Newspaper stories written abroad often return to Finland and Sastamala for the first sentence or paragraph. These parts do not provide the reader with any new information, and in my opinion do not work at all. They only distract from the point. For example, the transition from wild boars to a running trail in Sastamala is very awkward. Getting to the point directly would be preferable.

The logical continuity of topics should also be addressed more carefully. As it is, Thailand is written about at the beginning of the first library story before the narration has even gone there. Comparisons between countries and the editor's subjective thoughts could be moved to the beginning of stories and clearly indicated with e.g. cursive, allowing them to better serve as introductions.

For instance, the focus in the period of finding the library in Thailand shifts around. Is the text trying to follow the writer's geographical movement, the library's significance to the writer, or

the completion of a philosophical work? As there were many pieces on Finland and Sastamala, I was wondering whether these could be combined into a separate whole, which could also elaborate on the writer's personal relationship with the library as an institution.

People and their stories live on in the book. The best parts of the book are the interviews and personal profiles. The prose seems to take off better as soon as the writer shifts the focus onto other people. However, the book leaves an overall confusing impression due to its range from daily journalism at the beginning to the personal philosophies near the end.

Final comments: The motto at the beginning, quoted from J.R.R. Tolkien, is never justified. Sam is talking about a situation where the heroes have been abroad in order to save their home. As I see it, however, this was not the case here. The idea of heroism is also discussed critically at one point in the book. The motto should be thought over.

Saara Henriksson