

Heli
Laaksonen

*The Nature
of Finnish
Nature.*

ANIMALS, PLANTS, OTHERS

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To the Reader

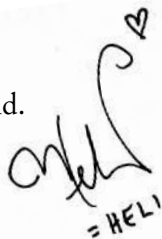
Hey you! Yes, you there!
Good to see you!

I love nature – the nature of all nations,
but that of my own Finland
kindles in me a burning desire
to write, speak, describe, sketch,
preach, and in all possible ways present it to everyone.

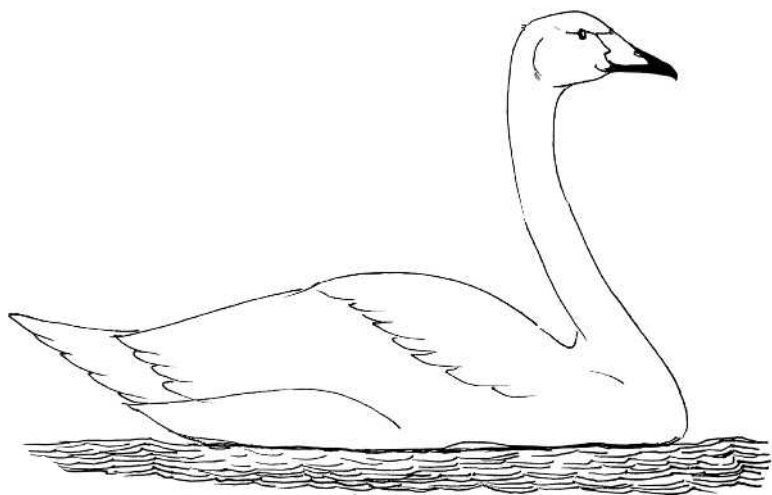
And now I have the opportunity to present it to you!

I am a writer by profession,
and a recently qualified
nature and environment advisor
(and also, by the way,
a member of the
Finnish Bryological Society).

Though the details of the book
may appear too strange or peculiar
to be true,
the truth is entirely what I intend to present.
The facts have been checked.
Telling the truth
will never diminish
the magic, sweetness and poetry of our land.
And that's the nature of Finnish nature.



Handwritten signature: *Helmi* with a heart symbol above the 'i' and the text "= HELMI" below the signature.



Whooper swan, laulujoutsen,
Cygnus cygnus,
is the national bird of Finland.

Whooper Swan

A voice rings out
through a March morn.
The light part of the year is already upon us,
light as we leave for work, and on our return, still light,
though the ice still crackles 'neath the tread of winter boots.

A voice rings out across the sky,
brass-band
clarion-call
hurdy-gurdy.
Over the beaches, across the swamps
the swan's song sounds,
Here they come again!
Would we even have the seasons,
without this white messenger gliding across the foamy sea,
to change them for us, as if changing fresh bedsheets?

Finland

Finland is a country
standing on its own sturdy stilts of wood
high in the conifer belt.

Finland is tall and upstanding:
there's room within for
everything from snow days to flower walks,
mountain fells to oak groves and lily ponds.

Finland is shaped like an apron flying in the wind.
Finland feels the chill breath of the North Pole.
Finland's southernmost settlement, however,
appears to be Fuengirola.
According to our Swedish neighbours,
we are the eastern land.
As for our own east – let's not go there right now.
Finland lies between west and east,
as the tongue between the teeth.

