

PROLOGUE

This issue is Cosmos Pen's English special, made for the Finncon 2006. Its aim is to present the Finnish fandom and sf/f to readers both home and abroad. The previous English special was published in 2003, for the Finncon-Eurocon, and the first one in 1990, for the Worldcon in Brighton.

The organized Finnish fandom is still relatively young, only in its early thirties. It has also the tradition of being characteristically non-commercial and based on volunteer work. The Finnish cons, grown with the years to mass events of several thousand visitors, are free. The Finnish field of sf/f fanzines also functions on the same principles.

Partly for this reason there is no commercial field of sf/f magazines in Finland. In many aspects the literary Finnish sf/f is still taking its baby steps. This has brought about some interesting phenomena, at present very visible in the literary field. Literary equivalent of a baby's tantrum?

In the last few years, however, there has been startling positive development in the field of domestic sf/f, especially concerning its increasing recognition and visibility internationally. Part of the story is the success of *Johanna Sinisalo's* novel **Not Before Sundown (Troll – A Love Story** in the U.S.) In its wake evident international interest has emerged about Finnish sf/f.

Recently the texts of domestic sf/f writers have been increasingly published beyond the borders of Finland. The short stories from such writers as *Johanna Sinisalo*, *Anne Leinonen* and *Pasi Jääskeläinen* have been translated to English, French, German and Estonian.

Another success story is *Hannu Rajaniemi*, a Finnish writer living in Scotland. His short story "Deux ex Homine" was published in the anthology **Nova Scotia** in 2005. It was also included in two high quality sf/f anthologies, **Year's Best SF #11** edited by *David Hartwell* and **Year's Best Science Fiction #23** edited by *Gardner Dozois*. The short story was

even short-listed for British Fantasy Award.

Leena Krohn is a Finnish long-standing writer of fantastic fiction. The recent English translation of her novel **Tainaron: Mail from Another City** was also short-listed for the 2005 World Fantasy Award in the novelette category and for International Horror Guild Award in the category of long fiction.

Last but not least in the world conquest of the Finnish sf/f is the anthology **The Dedalus Book of Finnish Fantasy**, edited by *Johanna Sinisalo*, which came out at the end of 2005. As the name implies, its idea is to present Finnish fantastic fiction from the end of 1800 to the present to the Anglo-American audience.

Each of these alone is but a small step, but together they form a whole that anybody would have thought impossible even a few years ago.

The articles in this issue are bound overlap to some extent, but each of them offers its own viewpoint on the subject. The readers of the previous English Special of Cosmos Pen may also find the material partly familiar, since some articles are updated versions of the previous ones.

The article "Sidestream of Mainstream" reviews the present state of Finnish sf/f, its roots and current trends. At present, there are many talented sf/f writers in Finland, but it seems that there is a tendency in the field to link up with mainstream literature rather than with the sf/f genre.

"The Finnish Fandom" on the other hand gives an overview of the Finnish Fandom, or *Finndom* as its also called, the various clubs, fanzines, awards and other activities. The previous version of the article served as the basis for the article by *Jukka Halme*, "The World of Finndom", published in *Emerald City* #109 in 2004.

One viewpoint on the subject is given by *Johanna Sinisalo's* "Happy Days", her award speech in Gaylaxicon 2005, where she received the James Tiptree Jr. award. In Finland,

realism dominates overwhelmingly the literary scene, and even though she already was a very successful short story writer, it was stunning news that her first novel had won the Finlandia award. And so has the continuing international success of her novel been ever since.

Johanna Sinisalo is also featured elsewhere in Cosmos Pen, as the writer interviewed in the "Cosmos Pen's Ten Questions for a Writer". The series has been published in Cosmos Pen since 2003. Its idea is to present domestic short story writers to the public. Get to know what she counts as her literary influences, has she ever come across a literary brother or sister, and where and when would she travel if she had a time machine?

Hannu Rajaniemi on the other hand tells in his article about the field of publishing in Great Britain. Even if the publishing world in out there is of a different magnitude, there are also surprising similarities in the Scottish and Finnish sf/f circles.

As a sample of the regular contents of Cosmos Pen we offer the "Recipe for a Bad Short Story" by *Anne Leinonen*. It is a collection of some typical stumbling blocks found in the Nova short story contest. The article is useful reading for any aspiring writer, whatever the language or nationality.

Short fiction in this issue is represented by *Jaana Wessman's* "Raphael's Angel", from the Baltastica Contest, organized in connection with the Finncon-Eurocon in 2003. The first cross-Baltic sf/f writing contest produced several good quality short stories. Unfortunately, the results have not reached the fanzine publicity they deserve.

I wish to thank all the writers of this issue. Massive thanks especially to *Liisa Rantalaiho* who translated a major part of the articles, including this editorial.

I hope you enjoy the ride. Keep watching the skies!

Pasi Karppanen