



Tulevazuksii

(Futures)

SARA MAARIA SAASTAMOINEN 

POETRY



ABSTRACT

“Tulevazuksii: (Futures)” imagines ways as a karjalaine¹ to build abundant alternative futures for karjalazet.² Among many other specific place names, we karjalazet name our Indigenous lands Karjala.³ The current international geopolitical border that separates Russia and Finland cuts its way through Karjala, splitting our peoples in two. As a poetic intervention, “Tulevazuksii” weaves together childhood memories, ancestral knowledge, and everyday acts of resurgence to reclaim one’s own karjalažus.⁴ I invert the caricatured descriptions of karjalazet from Finnish popular imagination into a source of subversive strength for our people. I insist on the karjalažus of our language, stories, more-than-human relations, and foodways and foreground the active work needed to ensure futures where karjalažus continues to exist. “Tulevazuksii” serves as both a refusal of assimilation, forgetting ourselves, and forced transparency and a call to the continued work of futures building for karjalazet.

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I dream futures where my people,
we of sly, slippery tongues, still
speak sung poetry with lovers' lips

I sow futures, so we keep our stories
close but not closed, no diaries burned
in shame and secrecy into eternal silence

I water futures, floating across constellations,
tesseract of our relations, tending our millennial nets,
your bright, dark eyes glistening in mine

I feed futures of microbes, we who will not die,
clinging to bowls, bowels of trees, scraped,
lathed, reclaimed from air, awaiting resurrection

I cry futures, feeling my way, tongue leaden
through a language once told to me
as mummosi⁵ strange phrasings

As I swim the depths of these ~~strange~~ new phrases
always already known,
always already mine

As I search for ~~estranged~~ relations
diving into freshwaters,
diving in fresh to our waters


As I survive in sounds
we are here,
we are known,
we are mine and ours,
now, already, and always

Amen.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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- 1 Translated as Karelian person (livvi, Livvi-Karelian).
 - 2 Translated as Karelian people (livvi, Livvi-Karelian).
 - 3 Translated as Karelia (livvi, Livvi-Karelian).
 - 4 Translated as Karelianness, being Karelian (livvi, Livvi-Karelian).
 - 5 Translated as your grandmother's (suomi, Finnish).

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