

An abstract black ink drawing on a white background. It features a large, stylized face in profile, looking towards the left. The face is composed of thick, expressive black lines. The hair and upper part of the face are defined by a large, sweeping curve. The lower part of the face, including the mouth and chin, is more detailed with cross-hatching and fine lines. From the right side of the face, several thick, dark, branch-like lines extend downwards and outwards, resembling roots or a stylized beard. The overall style is graphic and expressive, reminiscent of traditional East Asian ink wash painting.

LAKE ONEGA

Leevi Lehto

and Other Poems

A New Edition
With an Appendix
by Michael Peverett
ntamo 2017

Lake Onega and Other Poems

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and Other Poems
LEEVI LEHTO

With an Appendix by Michael Peverett

ntamo, Helsinki

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Author's Note to the First Edition

This selection traces the development of my later poetry – from the poems of the early Nineties with their influences from Finnish Fifties Modernism, and, I suspect, from early New York School writing, to the metrical experimentation of my “Dantean-Dadaistic” suite of sonnets, *Lake Onega* (1997),^j and to my more procedurally oriented recent work.

The translations are either by myself, or by me in collaboration with others (acknowledged for in the “Notes”). There may be an element of Second Language English in at least some of them – if so, the reader is asked not to see it as altogether inadvertent. The translations of sonnets in the *Lake Onega* suite are often more properly seen as adaptations, or improvisations – in keeping with methods used to produce the originals (again, see the “Notes” for examples). The “Coupons Will Remember” suite, as well as the final Google poem, were originally written in English.

I wish to thank my co-translators C. B. Hall and Tommi Nuoponen, as well as Fredrik Hertzberg and Alan Prohm for useful hints and suggestions regarding the language. A special thank to Anselm Hollo for an earlier translation of “Juanita And Aspects” which was used as a basis for my translation here, and to Charles Bernstein, Marjorie Perloff, and Kenneth Goldsmith for encouragement, inspiration, and support.

Helsinki, January 2006

Leevi Lehto

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Author's Note to the ntamo Edition

Apart from a few minor adjustments to the language, the addition of the poem “Rounds From A Racheting Rocket”, page 90, change of the title of the corresponding section to comply with the title of the poem, and the new Appendix featuring Michael Peverett’s review of the First Edition, published here courtesy of the author, this edition strives to an accurate reproduction of the First Edition.

Helsinki, May 2017

Leevi Lehto

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Poems From Early Nineties

“An adventurous, witty, impertinent and intense book, teeming with *sprezzatura*, whose central premise is inter-lingual. How? Leevi Lehto has translated, homophonically re-coded, and trans-fabricated his own Finnish poems, other Finnish poetry, and some work (Shakespeare, Sidney, Keats) into an impeccably hilarious and poised English. This work draws on many discourses and jargon groups, melanging them with a dandyish political intelligence and enough of the awkwardly unidiomatic to make the book a tragi-comic-melodramatic, journalistic-conceptual, narrative, and “sex personals” explosion of socio-poesis. Lehto has gulped of a Pierian Spring laced with a synthetic tincture of poetic smarts (snarks?) that takes the measure of contemporary experiments from the objectivist to the flarfiste.” – *Rachel Blau DuPlessis*

This selection, first published in 2006 by Salt in UK, traces the development of Leevi Lehto's later poetry – from the “imagist” early 90's work through the metrical experimentation of the *Lake Omega* sonnets (1997) to the procedurally oriented poetics of the 00's.

Most of the texts are translations, all are tests of translation, while some may offer themselves as exercises in Second Language English Literature.

An essay by Michael Peverett puts (almost) all in perspective.

Leevi Lehto (born 1951) is a Finnish poet, translator (of, among others, *Ulysses* by Joyce), and publisher in ntamo 2007–2017.

