

Oulunsalo fiction, Pt. 1

# ICE ROAD



**Jani Ojala**

Oulunsalo Fiction, Pt. 1

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sentimental fiction

**Jani Ojala**

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The ferry doesn't run at night-time  
Ice road is in use





## Acknowledgments

### Van Morrison

Never before have I been able to credit something I've done to one single song. Your song "Astral Weeks", however, was the first spark of Ice Road. Other things would pile on top and ignite, hence this book.

Thank you, for waking up a dreamer in me.

### Richard O'Connor

For your book *Undoing Depression*. Real insightful, helpful, and one of the major inspirations of this book.

### Family – my mother, my father, my two brothers, my sister-in-law, my two nephews Mikael and Samuli

For listening, being there, and being the proper surrounding. This book would not be possible without you.



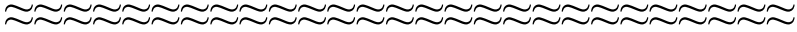


## CONTENTS

<b><u>First words</u></b>	<b><u>p. 11</u></b>
<b><u>PLAY 1 — The Loneliness</u></b>	<b><u>p. 13</u></b>
<b><u>PLAY 2 — The Trust</u></b>	<b><u>p. 67</u></b>
<b><u>PLAY 3 — The Hate</u></b>	<b><u>p. 113</u></b>
<b><u>PLAY 4 — Fear of the Unknown</u></b>	<b><u>p. 163</u></b>
<b><u>PLAY 5 — The Harm</u></b>	<b><u>p. 209</u></b>
<b><u>Last words</u></b>	<b><u>p. 259</u></b>



# First Words



Umm ice road as in aaaaaum... Like a hard path maybe, a hard slippery path that you have to get on. It's hard but, you must cross it. And eventually you do, but with struggle and hard work... Am I close?

—Ivan Grgona



Is it like a memoir of sorts, does it delve in a metaphor? I mean, roads are usually symbolic of journeys in any context.

—Jonathon Allen



Frozen bay maybe... Or maybe some symbolic representation of your hometown peninsula.

—Aravind Nair



Ice Road...probably a metaphor for your journey in life, like driving down an icy road, it's slippery and you have/had to be very cautious.

—Dennis Grant





# PLAY 1

## THE LONELINESS

# Chapter 1

## The Cabinet Door, Pt. 1

The slightly hairy, tanned palm of a middle aged man ever-so-slightly missed its target and landed on a nightstand on the bedside. The resting man lifted his fist from the surface of the table, and got the job done with the next smack. Moments of a slow summer's morning rolled on by. He was sleepy, with clouded instincts, staring at the brown, as-normal-as-can-be wall of his bedroom. Time dragged along and a tired hand fell down to the side of the bed, searched for a sec and picked up a pair of jeans.

After dressing up while half-conscious, the man started – fully dressed – to drag himself out. As he opened the door of his bedroom, there was the view of the living room, which he scrolled past, to get to the kitchen. His unsure, tired eyes struggled to stay on track. *The coffee. Gotta get the coffee.*

His old ways, rehearsed in all the routine-*dulled* mornings of the past, guided him to take the coffee bag from the cabinet. He barely even noticed himself digging up a spoon and drowning it in coffee grounds. He laid his eyes on the cabinet door while executing the morning routine. It was white and figure-less, stripped of the beauty it *must'a possessed when it was just a tree somewhere. What do I give a fuck.*

He got lost in thought again, this time more aggressive ones. For a stretched second he stared at that cabinet door because it

was just, a comfortable layout. *Am I gonna wake up this morning at all?*

Something snapped and he tried to remember what was in his hands. In a hurry to make up time *for some reason*, he started pouring the grounds into the coffee maker. He was so familiar with that coffee maker that *I could make coffee all day long without looking at it, even*. The eyes still hadn't left their sight from that cabinet door. *This aint funny anymore*. He looked at that coffee maker again, and there was a pile of coffee grounds that laid on top of the unopened cap. *This morning's too **long**...*

Approximately ten minutes later it was all done, he had *finally* got the *goddamn* coffee to boil. He stepped outside to greet the morning with a forced smile to the sky, *which never responds anyway...* Something reminded him to get back to his morning hurries.

As he got to the mailbox, he opened it up and saw the corner of the morning paper peaking out. He shoved his hand in the box, got the paper and started walking back. On his way he felt a small, quiet *but unpleasant* vibration next to his thigh and got the phone out of the pocket, answering:

— **Tapani Kumavaara.**

Tapani listened to restless complaint from the phone and tried to sneak a word in:

— Miska, hey... Miska! If you could... I can't help you right now, I'm in the middle of some shit.

— *This is real this time, asshole! I need your help ASAP.*

Tapani stopped walking at his front door.

— Sorry, I gotta go now, the guy just arrived.

— *What guy?*

— I'm driving this guy to the city. Listen, I gotta go now. I'll



call you later.

Frustrated, he shoved the phone back in his pocket, opened the door and stepped in, made his way back to the kitchen and threw the morning paper to the table. The upper left corner of the paper met the surface of the table first, and Tapani watched the paper landing on its back.

- *--I wonder if everyone leaves their paper on the table like this? What's the traditional way people have of protecting their papers as they put them away for a little while to get a cup of coffee after a struggle like mine?*
  - *What danger does this little reflex-initi--*
    - *What am I doing?*

In a daze, Tapani picked up the phone again and made a call... The phone tooted. Soon, the voice bothering him outside just a minute ago, responded:

— *Hello?*

— You mean you need help right now?

— *Yeah, you wouldn't even know how... Man, I'm not sure, but I think I just heard this guy breathing, and--*

— Not on the phone. I'll meet you there in a half an hour.

— *Okay, sounds cool, but what if it--*

— You already know.

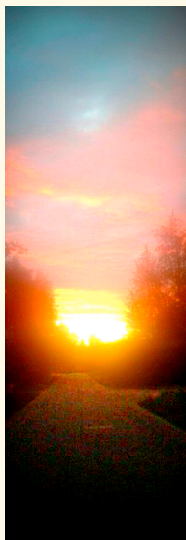
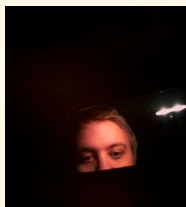
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Business as us'

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He looked at the front page of the newspaper, which read something about some Soisalo-family and their "life as a family — a renewed one."

— "I figured I could drive by your place after I drop the guy



”Business as us”.

Tapani Kumavaara is a depressed freelancer-criminal in his early 40's, and his story of battling with depression is reflective of a chapter in my past — one I'm on a mission of coming in terms with.

The story takes place in his hometown of Oulunsalo, where his thoughts explore desperation by ambitiously wallowing in it, falling deeper into conflict about self, existential questions, destructive emotion, judgement.

He and his friends get a job as corpse-disposers. One of those friends is Samuli — a younger man, who also faces crisis, but does so with grace, breaking loose like the phoenix, becoming a pro at life.

Other ones are the impulse-driven, irrational Miska, and the recently released Riku. They join in on burying dark sins in the pristine nature of the neighboring island of Hailuoto. Meanwhile, at home, everything is at its horribly wrong place, everything is at stake, everything runs wild and everything is impossible to grab onto.

Ice Road is the first part of the ”Oulunsalo Fiction” trilogy.



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