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Heikki Pajuoja and Heimo Karppinen (eds.)

Vantaa

This on-line version differs from the printed Proceedings 2004.
Ragnar Jonsson's paper is included in this version, but is missing from the paper copy.

One Bird still is Singing in Pasila

In night-time Pasila,
the last song-bird still
alive in a forest of concrete and glass,
has flooded the air
with her song, and the rare
interventions of measuredly corporate grass
listen: for soon this blithe moment will pass.

In the financial centre,
all greenspace has meant a
remission of rentals, lost targets for tax.
But the saplings and seating
leave enclaves where, fleetingly,
people can listen, and look, and relax
with the one song-bird east of the grey railway tracks.

The sterile-slabbed acres –
whose movers and shakers
of daytime have fled from these tracts of despair –
were inflicted by faceless
designers of graceless
and cosmos-wide sameness of functioning, where
once a bird *might* have sung in a Saarinen square.

The workers have vanished
from offices, banished
to Helsinki's suburbs and further afield:
but lone men in the sinister
centre administer
heart-pumping episodes, nerve-endings steeled
to confront deadly dangers deep shadows may shield.

Once, the night air bore freight
of tree fragrance, a state
that a resin-spiked wind for an instant restores,
expressing the spruces'
alternative uses
of land, now surmounted by twenty-five floors
and vents out of which the reprocessed air pours.

The bird's song has ended;
and steps have descended
to threatening thresholds that yet must be crossed.
And the silence is stiller
in night-time Pasila
because of the memory of melody lost.

by Colin Price

