

Annette Arlander



Tell it to the Pine 1 (11.1.2021)

Dear Pine, thank you for allowing me to sit like this, on you, at the shore of Örö Island. I decided to come and visit you while I am here now simply because you grow in such a lovely spot on the western shore and are bent in a manner as if you were inviting me to sit on you. I am sure I am not the first human who sits here, while most of the others are probably sitting here during the summer, and now it is eleventh January 2021. And although the weather is clear and sunny and not terribly cold it is nevertheless winter. I have tried to write to pine trees here before, but this time I decided to try to talk in a microphone, to literally tell it to the pine. And even though it feels slightly weird, and I have no idea how it will sound, this is a more direct way of talking to you. I assume that you do not understand Swedish or any human language, but it is possible that you can sense or hear or feel my voice in some way. Many plants can hear sounds, recognise sounds in some manner. And I like to think that you can in some way suspect my intentions and that you can feel, or if you feel you can sense that I wish you well, or at least that I do not wish you any harm.

To be honest I talk to you today not so much for your sake but for my own sake. I have just turned 65 years old, the day before yesterday, and it felt good to celebrate it, that day of significance here with the pine trees on the island. I visited another pine near the casern area then. Although this is a good place to grow older in it is nevertheless slightly creepy. I realized that I should probably now retire, be retired, to apply for a pension. I have no work right now to retire from, but I have fortunately a working grant, and can work quite normally all through this year. The mere thought, however, of retiring is slightly scary. You are not a young pine yourself, either, but I find it difficult to think that pine trees would retire. Pine trees can die, dry out, wither away and also become very, very old, and I can see from your needles and your cones that you are working full time despite being bent in this strange manner, probably because of some autumn storm when young. But yes, I don't know, I'm not really asking for your advice concerning how to relate to this idea of retirement, I only want to have another perspective on it by pondering on it together with you.

Considered in another way you are retired all the time in the sense that you work on your own and do what feels important for you and what you need to do to keep yourself alive and to help all the other creatures that are supporting themselves on you, such as all the various types of lichen that grow on your bark right here. Not to mention all the other plants and animals and microbes that you help in their functioning. It is difficult for a human being to understand a tree, to understand for real. And probably it is also difficult for a pine tree to understand a human being. Rather than complain to you or lighten my heart as the saying goes, talk about my worry in front of getting old and retired and not being needed any longer as one could perhaps say, I should perhaps listen to you instead. What I hear, however, is not you but rather the sea nearby. Thank you anyway for listening to me. Thank you for existing and for letting me know that I might come back to you sometimes. I hope you have a nice remaining winter. Take care.



Tell it to the Pine 2 (20.2.2021)

Dear Pine, it's nice to be here with you again. It's more than a month since last time. It is February, 20 of February 2021 and there is unusually much snow this year, a real winter despite the climate change. I wonder if you are hibernating through the winter like bears do, and many animals, or resting, that you must surely do. Although you have your green needles and in principle you can continue working as usual. But I imagine it is too cold for all the liquids to move in your trunk. Or perhaps the trunk is thick. Now it is not that cold, in fact it is snowball weather, around zero, but last week was very cold and the week before as well. Perhaps plants don't feel cold in the same way as animals. They freeze though, the cold can kill plants of course. You pine trees, however, are accustomed to the cold. I can imagine it will become more difficult when it gets warmer. Not that warmth as such would be a problem if there is water, and there should be here. But there will be hordes of new insects and fungi and all sorts of bugs that like to eat and bore holes in you and so on. It is a question of balance, I understand. Your bark is filled with all kinds of lichen and that seems to be no problem for you. But obviously it is something else if there are insects that bore into your wood and spread illnesses.

I don't know whether it is possible for you to prepare for climate change. In principle it would be dangerous for you to be so near the shoreline, near the sea, because if the sea level would rise as much as they have planned it will do, then you would end up under water, really. Fortunately, we still have the land elevation after the ice age, here, which counters the rising sea level a bit. The sea looks stunning now when it is covered with ice. The ice is dark and not white today, and resembles the ordinary sea, but it is exciting because completely silent. There is a little wind now and I can imagine the wind hits the microphone as well every now and then, but this morning it was completely silent. When arriving from the city such silence is almost unreal. And then suddenly one hears a small bird that realises there will be spring after a while. It does not feel like spring in this cold although the light returns. They say that plants know when to start growing, not because the light returns, but because they, even before that, because it gets dark. I wonder if that is true for you as well.

I don't know whether you sleep, or rest, or whether you are here now, aware, aware in the manner a pine tree is aware. In some sense you are much more aware than humans, for example regarding nuances of light or nuances of humidity, I suppose, and so on. On the other hand, you don't have a consciousness which is like ours. I can imagine the wind is most important because the wind bends you and forces you to follow it, or bend for the wind. And it is only the wind that is audible now when the sea is not roaring freely. I hope I am not disturbing your rest by sitting here. Perhaps I should leave you to rest in peace. Thank you anyway for letting me sit here and thank you for letting me talk with you even though I have nothing exciting to tell you right now. Nor any good news regarding the climate change either. Although it feels like people would be slowly waking up a little bit to see that something must be done now. Maybe. Meanwhile, have a good time. I hope we will meet again before spring. Thank you.



Tell it to the Pine 3 (11.5.2021)

Dear Pine, nice to see you again after such a long break. We met last time at the end of February and at that time the shore was covered in snow. Now the sand is shining in the sun. I just saw a viper slither in the sand, and it hid quickly in a tussock of juniper, like a small island in the sand, where it was hidden. I waited for a while to see if it would come out on the other side, but no, it stayed there, because it did not want to deal with me. I understand that and I think, I mean it is good that it evades rather than attacks me. It struck me, dear pine, that you don't have that opportunity. I come to you and sit down on your trunk and am very glad to see you. What if you are not glad to see me. You cannot slither away like the snake... One should perhaps not compare different modes of reacting. You have your thick bark to protect you. It is as if you could close your ears if you don't want to listen to what I try to tell you. Yes, I read or skimmed an article recently about pine trees. A scientific text that analysed different pine species' historical development or rather in pre-historic, geological time. And it considered both ecological and genetical issues. And it was important as a study, a global study in biodiversity or the diversity of nature and how it might be affected by climate change or the warming climate.

And the writers had realized that most pine trees have evolved at the mid altitudes. At first, I did not understand what it was all about, but mid altitudes refer to the differences in altitude in the mountains. And here in Finland we think in terms of north and south, which species survive further south, and which withdraw towards the north when it gets warmer, while elsewhere it is question of mountains, so the species that grow in the north here, they grow higher up in the mountains. I had not thought of that. What is exciting from your perspective or why I tell you about this is that I learned that there are pine trees all over the planet, everywhere, and as many different species, and they have, you have, existed here for a long time, immensely long. I thought the great forests of Siberia or perhaps of Canada would contain most pine trees, but there are pine trees in Australia and Africa, there are various kinds of pine trees everywhere. I have understood or at least imagined that all the pine trees living in Finland belong to the same species, although there might be some local variants. Perhaps there is a specific Örö variant? Well, this is a typically human way of considering things, to classify and name, and that is perhaps not most important. However, I spent all of April in Hailuoto Island high up in the Gulf of Bothnia and there are plenty of pines, too.

They are partly different, and they also have pine trees that they call "tarri", which are kind of "martallar", (pines bent by the wind in the archipelago) although old and thick. In principle they are of the same species of pine, I guess. You are a large family. But I don't know if that is important for you here, now. I guess it is rather better for you to have plenty of space around you, while still having some relatives in the vicinity. And there are many types of twigs and shrubs and juniper and moss and various mushroom, there were plenty of morels not far from here. I came across an article by Suzan Simard, a forest scientist, a Canadian woman who is now very much talked about because she has written about "The Mother Tree". But she also writes about collaboration among trees, and how specific tree species thrive together because they like the same fungal mycelia and so on. I wonder what your favourites are. But you have lived here on Örö for such a long time, in these circumstances, so you have probably developed good collaborations over the years.

What else can I tell you? The idea was to talk about my own sorrows or worries and perhaps joys, but I don't know if I have any acute ones right now. While the spring is on its way and the Covid crises is slowly subsiding – yes, I have had my first vaccination, that's lovely – and while the light has returned and warmth will slowly return as well, we are all becoming more optimistic and joyful and full of hope. One can really feel it when walking in the woods here how everybody is hurrying to get their leaves out to be able to begin photosynthesis and... the bugs are appearing. Not far from here a large spiderweb was already being weaved and so on. It is beautiful to be among life. Vipers, too, after all. Sorry for saying that, it is not only life that attracts me to you, but the fact that you are so special and grow in such a special place with a beautiful view of the sea and with such a bent trunk, as if made for all the humans that pass by here to sit and rest on for a while. How should I put it, I don't even have to think you have made it on purpose, it works as an invitation regardless, so thank you for that.



Tell it to the Pine 4 (27.6.2021)

Dear Pine, how nice to see you again. I didn't expect it to be so nice, that it would feel so good to be sitting here once more. I was here in May, although it was a brief visit. Now it is Sunday after Midsummer, June 27, because Midsummer was so late this year. It is very warm, but there is a brisk wind, and I am worried that the microphone I am talking in will register mainly the wind. And usually that does not sound so good. The wind is nice because the mosquitoes disappear. – I'm trying to avoid talking during the gusts of wind, but it is hard to decide what is audible and what is not. In any case I hope you have had a good time, and you look good as usual. There have been lots of people on the island over Midsummer, but they seem to fit in here very well, or ... then everybody is sticking to the harbour or the hotel area. And the ones who walk out on the shores or the cycling paths, they do it to be at peace. – This time I have stayed at the Öres residency, in the house near the southern tip, which I lived in when I came here the first time. And I really like it. It is an old building from Russian time, built for the officers, I suppose, with high ceiling and large windows. A young couple, who was here to learn about the residency and worked on a film stayed in the other room. They were very nice, but they left today, and I noticed how glad and relaxed I was when being able to be on my own, strange enough. And nevertheless, I seek out you here, for company.

Perhaps the biggest news I can tell you is that it really looks like I could continue visiting you, because The Arts Promotion Centre or whatever the State Arts Council is really called nowadays has preliminary granted me a scholarship. It is a little bit, it is not completely sure yet, because it needs... the state budget needs to be approved first, although it is very likely. Perhaps you remember that I told you in the winter how worried I was at the thought of having to retire, and I did not really want to retire yet. And now I don't have to do that, and that's nice. Visiting pines, like you in this way, is not the only thing that I shall be doing, but it is part of what I have planned to do. And it feels very good to have it approved in a way. That it is not considered madness but a quite acceptable way of making one kind of art. That is what we need art for, today. Not so much as decoration or interior design or event culture, even though that, too, is needed, but rather as an attempt at focusing another way, to draw attention to things one otherwise would not consider. Right now, it feels in any case like everybody would be considering trees and plants, various forms of life, besides animals, which have been pondered already for a long time.

I have promised to write an article in Finnish about performing with plants, or what challenges it entails to performance theory or theatre theory or dance theory, or thinking about performances, if you take it as your task to understand what it means to perform with plants and especially trees. I'm writing it for an anthology with writers from many different fields and authors who speak of aesthetics related to the environment from various perspectives. And it feels like a challenge to try to give some kind of overview. Usually, I write mainly about my own work. Even though I must put it in context and relate it to what other artists are doing or what philosophers have written, my contribution is nevertheless the experiences I have of trying it out myself. And I'm not sure if that works in this article. Well, it is a little bit silly to ask you for advice, but on the other hand, who else could give me better advice. If I could understand your way of communicating it would be beautiful to get to know directly from you how you think we humans should perform with trees. Unfortunately, I have no such extra sensitivity. And I try to avoid fantasizing too much.

I have listened to recorded talks from a conference called something like Toward a New Way of Being with Plants and there have been many different, very different approaches. The talk I most recently listened to was by a biologist who worked with plant intelligence and argued for using the word intelligence, which many physiologists think is completely wrong, because plants don't have a brain. But intelligence and brain are not interdependent, in humans they are perhaps, but not necessarily in other beings. In his talk this Spanish researcher pointed out that it is nevertheless important that we don't interpret plants' way of relating to their environment from a narrow human perspective, but we should rather try to understand what is important for

you, what various things you must consider when you make decisions and judgements on how you should grow and how you should bend and what substances to absorb and so on. So, to respect your agency, your capacity to decide, to assess the situation and so on, I should know much more about how you experience the world. But, when I'm now sitting here, even though I don't want to fantasize too much, I'm not a biologist or a researcher on that level, and not a philosopher either, so I trust my senses and some kind of feeling.

They are not so reliable, I must admit, but... well, what can I say. That I was so glad to see you, I felt such a warmth for you, that I can only hope that I could in some manner offer you some kind of joy in return. How that could take place, I don't know, but yes... In any case I want to say thank you for letting me sit here again, thank you! I hope we will meet again soon, or I know it is very likely that we will meet again soon, at least in late August, early September, when I plan to come for a short visit again. Have a good time until then. Enjoy the summer and the warmth and the light, the amount of light. Take care.



Tell it to the Pine 5 (31.8.2021)

Dear Pine, nice to see you again. The weather is beautiful, almost no wind, and it's the end of summer, the last of August. Last time we met was at Midsummer, I think, at the end of June in any case, so it's almost two months since then. It's unusually quiet, due to the wind, or the lack of wind. I read about the forest, the forest after us, a book in Finnish. And there was a detail that struck me, quite concretely. Well, struck me, but stayed in my memory because it had an impact on me. And it was the detail that most of the pine trees in our country are never allowed to live to adulthood, or they are allowed to grow until they are adults, and they are felled immediately when they have reached a certain height, that is when they are grownups. But they can never experience an adult life and especially not experience a life where they get old. If you can, as the pines that grow here, if you can live to maximum five hundred years or at least 3-400 years, especially in the north, it is rather cruel to kill you when you are about sixty... I'm thinking that if my whole generation would have been killed around the age of twenty, twenty-five... That is what happens in war, young men – or happened at least earlier, young men are sent out to kill each other. But to do that in times of peace. Well, I know it is called cultivation and you do that with different types of cultivation, even with broilers. But it is sad to think of it.

The pines have sort of no time to become individuals. And that is the reason why you are so nice here, and all your neighbours on Örö Island as well, and on many other islands, why not other national parks, too, because you can live your life and become what you are, in some sense expressions of what the environment has offered you. So, you have adapted to what life has brought you. I am not addressing you formally, I mean you pine trees in general, although I should perhaps talk about you specifically, because you are a good example, with your dual trunk, which is besides divided into two thick branches, and I'm sitting on one of them. And one could think they are sort of deformations, but rather they are results of life, of course. Well, it is sad to tell you about your compatriots or species mates that live on the plantations and get killed. And I have to say that I am part of that as an owner of some forest as part of an estate, so I cannot boast of having any kind of moral right of way here. I am also participating in the forest farming. And in some sense, I understand that people cultivate various things to utilize plants and animals and so on, but it is nevertheless... there should be some kind of balance.

Therefore, it is important that more and more forests are allowed to be forests and not forest fields, or tree fields. The fact that, there are people who say that one cannot recreate a forest. If it has been felled once it will take thousands of years for it to become an old growth forest. But to let the trees live their life until the end, I find that beautiful. And that means, especially the pine trees often remain standing. Many spruce trees fall over, with their roots following the ground, while the pine trees often remain standing when they are dead and rot slowly or dry up to become those beautiful grey sculptures that are called in Finnish "kelohonka", I don't know what they are called in Swedish (or English). There are a few of them here on Örö as well, although everything is rather

cleaned up. This is like a nature park that is taken care of. And as we spoke of earlier, they kill pine trees here, too, simply to keep the ground open. Yes, what else could I tell you? I could tell that I came here now for a few days, only a few days, to perform with another pine tree which stands near the hotel area or the old casern area. I will swing in it and try to swing synchronised with a projection of a swinging which we recorded at Midsummer when I asked passers-by or summer guests to come and swing in the swing and then recorded that. And now I have made a video, which I will project back on the pine tree. And this will take place only at 9 pm on Thursday so you can hopefully see something of the image. I will record everything on video as well because there will not be many spectators here, I suspect, although perhaps a few.

I think that pine tree is older than you, in any case it is very much bigger. But because it grows there in a more protected area and on a, well, more fertile place, and with less wind, it might be that you are of the same age despite you being smaller. I have planned to see if I could meet some new pine trees here on the island. That does not mean that I would not return to you when I come back next time. But to learn more about you, in some way. In any case, yes, what else can I tell? Yes, I participated in a conference on artistic research and talked about writing letters to trees together with the trees or by the trees. And then I mentioned briefly, in passing, that I have experimented with this talking with trees as well. It is only with you, however, that I have made this experiment. You are the only pine tree that I have not written to but try to talk to and record what I'm talking. Then it becomes a little, well, chatty at times. So perhaps I should stop chattering and let you continue enjoying the last of the summer days. Thank you for letting me sit here with you again. And have a good time. Take care.



Tell it to the Pine 6 (8.10.2021)

Dear Pine, it's only a month since we last met, and it feels like eternity. The world is completely different now, at least Örö island. It is October 8, the wind blows hard, or strongly, from south-west, south. It is cloudy, rather chilly. I came here yesterday, and I hurried to you immediately today because they have forecasted rain for the rest of the week. I will stay here until next Thursday and that is great. I hope I will be able to visit you one more time this year, but that is not certain. This might be our last meeting. But I hope that is not the case. Although the world around you has changed, the autumn has arrived, you look like before. You have probably grown during the summer, although so very little that I cannot see it. The wind blows sand in my eyes and hair. I was here on Örö for the first time in November last year, but I did not find it very cold. Perhaps I expected November cold, and it felt warm compared to that. While now I imagined that October is still autumn, only the beginning of autumn, actually. Thus, it shouldn't be so terribly cold. Well, it is not terribly cold, it is not below zero, it is only chilly. I'm only instinctively, somehow set on the days becoming warmer all the time because of the climate crises. Although it does not have to become warmer necessarily, there might be more rain, more storms, more oddities.

The day before yesterday I participated in a demonstration for the first time in my life, not first time in my life but first time in tens of years, to support Extinction Rebellion or Elokapiina as it is called in Finnish. I don't really know what it is called in Swedish. That is, young people who demand that the government should declare a crisis, state of exception, and take measures to fix the climate crisis. And there was a group of researchers, partly from Aalto, partly from University of the Arts and Helsinki University, who stood up with a banner or two to support the young people. So, I stood holding a banner with the text in English Researchers Rebel for Life. Researchers revolting to support life. And that is something you like to do. It felt good to stand there, in front of the young people who sat on the street and blocked the traffic. We stood there for a long time, one and a half hour, before the police told us to disperse. And then we dispersed nicely. But the young people stayed, and they were removed by the police, in custody. I'm not an activist, I'm really, I'm certainly practical, but... by sitting here with you, that's sort of my way of expressing my opinion. Thus, I was a little afraid to participate at first.

But it felt quite good, oddly enough, and right. Whether it has any effect is another matter. At least there was some visibility in the media.

I don't know what should be done, but I trust the activists and climate scientists who say that there are solutions, only political decisions are missing, and I believe that's true. With the Covid crisis we saw that drastic decisions can be made. Decisions can be made that feel unpleasant but are necessary to make a change. That is perhaps the most exciting thing that has happened to me since we met last time. I have been in Stockholm quite a lot, and there I associate with a ginkgo tree that they have planted recently right next to the place where I live. What else can I tell you; I don't know. I'm thinking of beginning a new series, or new, but I mean a new project... In my working sketches I call it 'Talar med tallar', talking with pines, although now I'm thinking if it would be better to call it 'Funderar med furor', thinking with pines, because it is not talking that is important but rather thinking. Or then meditating with 'martallar' or twisted pines if you want an alliteration (in Swedish).

There is supposed to be so very many different kind of pine trees in the world, and it would be nice to meet a few others, too. Because I think all you pine trees in Finland are relatives. I think you are all called *Pinus sylvestris*. There might be other pines in parks. But you are of the same pines, even you 'twisted pines', as far as I understand. It would be exciting, however, to meet other pine trees as well, and in that way draw attention to the multiplicity, if you wish. That will remain for next year. I don't know how it shall be. I have met many pine trees besides you, but it is really nice to come back to you and see that you are doing fine. Now my hands holding the microphone are so cold that I think I will leave you here in the wind and hope you don't suffer too much from it. And yes, I wish you all the best in the coming months, if I cannot come and visit you before Christmas, as I hope to do. Have a good time until then. Take care and thank you!



Tell it to the pine 7 (13.11.2021)

Dear Pine, here I am again, albeit now perhaps for the last time. No, not the last time we meet, probably, but rather the last time I record a conversation with you. It is November 13, 2021, and this is the seventh time I have come to you to tell you how I feel and to ask you how you feel. Today is a very special day again on Örö because it is completely calm. There is no wind, and it is quiet. There are some people here now because it is weekend and because there is some sort of festival going on. It is called Mörk Örö, Dark Örö, or something like that. That is not the reason I am here, but rather because I had the opportunity to come and stay at the residency when somebody had cancelled at the last minute. Otherwise, it feels very strange that a year has passed since I came here for the first time. And although I was fond of the island right from the start, I could not know then that I would visit the island so often. I don't think I noticed you already on my first visit although I loved to walk along this beach. In a way it does not matter that much because I could actually talk with some of your relatives and friends around here. Only that you have such a beautifully bent trunk that is so easy to come and sit down on.

What I thought I would talk with you about is something that is a challenge for me and that I came to think of because I listened to a talk about the challenges for art during the current climate crisis and the extinction of species and the environmental crisis in general. And the need to think both locally and globally, or then planetary if you prefer. That is an old slogan from Hippy times, to think globally and act locally, although in the situation today it has taken on a different meaning, because thinking of the wellbeing of the planet is partly about not only protecting the environment nearby, because... it is not possible to delimit fluctuations in the air, in the seas, up to and including the species that spread. And on the other hand, because of the injustice which still increases all the time. Even if we think we, or I think I am living simply, try to live simply, I am using more fossil fuels merely to stay alive than many, many, many others, most other people use in other parts of the world. And here, where it is relatively cool, a little extra warmth is not that dangerous, while a few extra degrees

warmth in areas that are drying out or being flooded by the sea is another matter. So those who have done the least in causing this problem of global warming, they are suffering the most. And that is completely wrong.

This task, however, to think on a planetary level, thinking of the whole planet, easily becomes very abstract. While it is much easier, when sitting here with you, to feel anchored in this very place and look around and ponder what is happening here. Although they are interlinked. Quite practically, that is, the sea is outside here, even though it is the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland, and they are almost a lake because the Danish Straits are so narrow. Nevertheless, I could send bottle mail from here and it could travel around all the oceans of the world and arrive in New Zealand or Australia or wherever. And on the other hand, a jellyfish or ... a small sea creature can come with the water in the wake of ships, they can travel all around the globe and suddenly settle here, for instance. Not to mention the wind, which brings with it not only butterflies from Germany and Poland, also... or sand grains from Sahara and perhaps up to and including the Russian steppes, while all the toxins that are spread out somewhere, sooner or later they mix among or with the winds.

It is, however, in a way abstract. Of course, another way of thinking that I probably should do, which is a more concrete way of relating the art I make with the planet as such, is to consider this microphone that I hold in my hand, where is it produced? Is it made in Germany, or perhaps it is made in Japan or Korea, although I have bought it via an online shop from Germany. And if you consider the materials it is built with, like our phones they contain most likely some rare earth minerals brought from mines in Africa or Asia, and perhaps with children working in terrible conditions. But above all they are materials of which there are limited resources. Thus, although I think sitting here talking with you is very immaterial or requires little cost and materials and will not result in much to get rid of in case no one wants it, only some files on a computer, in fact there are huge material costs needed to create the little technology that I use.

Another dimension, perhaps not so tangibly planetary is of course the fact that for me to come here requires a lot of fossil fuels. Now I came from Helsinki, and I did not take the train but the bus to Dalsbruk. I could have taken the train to Salo, but there was no train that early in the morning, or rather, no bus continuing from Salo, so I took the bus to Dalsbruk. And then I had to take a taxi from Dalsbruk to Kasnäs to take the ferry boat, which probably also consumes fossil fuels and oil. Thus, although I sit here and think I am enjoying ten days of simple life near you and the sea and the pine trees and the rest of nature, though it's not terribly expensive for me, there are huge costs, really, to come here and to have heat and water and so on. Now, I don't want to end my conversations with you with moralizing, although I find it a challenge not to forget the privileges that I enjoy in sitting here. And which in a way you also enjoy, in a paradoxical way, of course not in the same way as I do. But the fact that you are here in a national park by a beach where you can live your life out, hopefully, that's something really nice. Regardless, I now want to say goodbye... not completely, I will certainly get back to you and visit you at some stage, but our talks will end here. So, I say a big heartfelt thank you for letting me visit you all these times. And all the best, all possible good for you in the future. Thank you!



Tell it to the pine again **Örö 26.11.2023**

Dear Pine, great to see you again, and great to see you are living and growing. I came past here yesterday and saw your trunk, which used to be bent, now fallen completely to the ground. Now when I look at it I see that there is a breach but you are not broken, you simply grow partly along the ground. Great that nothing worse happened. It is almost two years, yes, almost exactly two years since I was here so there has been time for many storms. I was nevertheless surprised, because this part of your trunk is really thick and strong. But things happen. I have been thinking of you sometimes because you were the first pine tree, the first tree that I started talking with. And here comes the wind. I already wondered where it had gone, because it is usually windy here

on the western shore of Örö island. Yes, I visited you seven times in the year 2021 and you were the first pine tree or any tree that I started to talk to rather than write letters to. And that I have been doing more and more. And I thank you for the impulse to do that, actually. Thinking of what has happened to you during these two years it seems very obvious, because here you are lying now, although there are two trunks that rise upwards as usual. And what has happened to me, well. Partly inspired by you and also meetings with other pines here in Örö and elsewhere I instigated a new project called Pondering with Pines, *Miettii mäntyjen kanssa*, *Funderar med furor*, which I have worked on these recent two years focusing especially on pines. Not only tall old pines but all kinds of pines instead of trees in general. And I got a new home, a new apartment in Stockholm one year ago, or rather now, half a year ago, actually, which we share with my brother and his wife, in principle, although in practice I am the one living there, a week or two every month. And it's really great.

What else can I say has happened? I have visited some residencies, although not that many. This year only Mazzano Romano in Italy, near Rome. And there I expected to find many pines of the special Italian type or Mediterranean variation. Exactly in Mazzano Romano there were not so many of them, however, but more oak trees. And yes, I have written about pines and also visited some new pines. Right now I'm visiting a pine near Essingeleden in Stockholm and I'm talking with a pine in Kaivopuisto Park in Helsinki. I have also started a podcast called Talking with Trees with most of the conversations in English although a few I recorded in Swedish. And actually my conversations with you were the first group of podcast episodes that I published in Swedish. I wonder whether they were the first group over all, or whether my letters to the spruce on Harakka Island perhaps were the first ones. Well, it doesn't matter, I'm telling you all this trying to emphasise how important you have been to me and still are, and how I wish that you will not give up but will keep growing even in this part that I'm now sitting on that is resting on the ground. In some ways it is perhaps easier not to have to withstand the wind but rather rest on the ground in peace, because there is room. And you have the same or almost the same light on the ground as high up while you pines grow sparsely here on the beach. Right now it is cold. The sand is glistening with plenty of frost and it feels strange to walk on sand that is hard as a snow crust because the surface is frozen. The light is wonderful and I know you like it, too. Now I will wish you a very happy end of the year. And a happy new year as well, while I don't think I will be able come here again this year. This is the first time since the spring one and a half years ago, so it might take some time before we meet again. If I can come to Örö again I will surely visit you. All the best to you and take care.