

# The Music Teacher

*As experience by Veli Bruce Schaalje*

This is a true story.  
It happened in Oulu, Finland —  
on a cold night, in a quiet house,  
with an old piano that still had something to say.

I was new to leading districts back then.  
Far north. Oulu, Finland.  
Snow on the ground.  
Silence everywhere else.

I was there with two good men —  
Veli Steve Slagowski  
and Veli Markku Leppänen —  
teaching one more lesson,  
hoping for one more open heart.

Now let me say this plainly.  
I'm not a piano player.  
I can build things.  
Grow things.  
Fix things.  
Talk my way through most rooms.

But a piano?  
Those black and white keys  
never answered to me.

There it was.  
An upright Finnish piano  
against the wall.

Steve didn't explain.  
Didn't introduce himself.  
He just sat down.  
And when his hands touched the keys —  
the room changed.

Like A Bridge Over Troubled Water . . .  
Sillan Yli.

You could feel it, couldn't you?  
Like the piano had been waiting.  
Like it finally remembered  
what it was made for.



You couldn't tell by looking at him.  
No stage look.  
No performer's polish.  
But when he played—  
the piano belonged to him.

The man who owned that piano,  
a school music teacher,  
stood there hearing his own instrument  
speak for the first time.

He said,  
"I love this kind of music,  
but my church says it's sin."  
I told him,  
"There's music that pulls people down.  
But this song — this song lifts."

Then I said,  
"If I played that piano, that would be sinful.  
But Veli Slagowski —  
he's Art Garfunkel in disguise."

That man said,  
"I think this is the church for me."

A few weeks later, he was baptized.  
Sometimes a heart just knows  
when it's come home.

Later on,  
he became the music leader  
in the Oulu branch.

Turns out—  
God still calls His children  
in ways they understand.

Jumala rakentaa vieläkin siltoja —  
valon ja rauhan kautta.