

Our Tartu



Karin: A lovely place, where I've gone walking a lot. Heading left and uphill from the poster pillar, we reach Veski Street, where my dear grandmother – nana – lived in an old wooden house.



Nele: Those warm summer nights, when you sense being alive with each and every cell, and breathe Tartu in...



Oskar: Krooks Pub isn't much farther, and from there, it's just a stone's throw away and I'm right at Zavood...



Tiina: One of my favourite places in Tartu – walked my dog there every night. Those times are so precious to this day. :)



Uno: Thank you / Tartu song festival founders of yore! / Have strength / Tartuans of today and tomorrow – / blazing a trail to eternity for the winds of song! / May Estonian song sound out from now – / ringing throughout the oak grove of Tartu!



Andres: A soap opera playing at the Internet cafe?



Riina: Nice on the eyes, good for the soul!



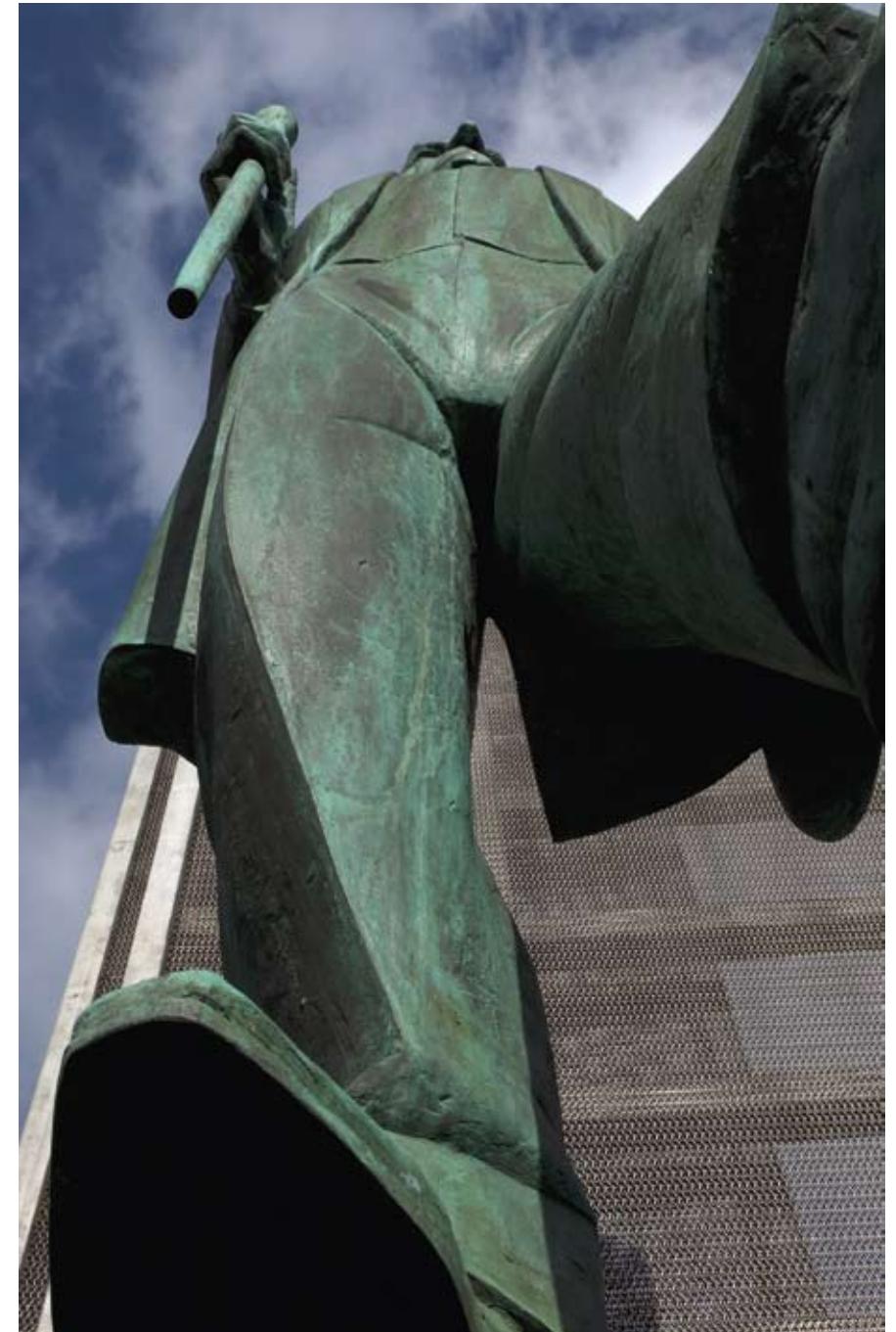
Kaarina: Songbirds on the rim.



Heivi: Mr. Jaan Tõnisson, to where are you rushing off? To the Postimees bureau across the street? To the construction site of the new Vanemuine club house on Aia Street? Or are you going to talk to the Tartu Estonian Farmers' Society about the benefits of cooperation? Or rather to stir up young men's patriotism at the Estonian Students' Society? Or to a meeting of the Estonian Youth Upbringing Society to discuss the founding of the first Estonian-language secondary school for young girls? Or are you racing to get on the train to Tallinn to fulfil your duties as minister, member of parliament or head of state? Or rather to the university, where students are awaiting their professor's lectures on cooperation? Yet it's as if your hastening has eased for a moment. You grow wistful and cast a glance towards Tööstuse Street; towards the abandoned house that was once home to you and your family. You'd like your home to be a place, from which Estonians may absorb the spiritual strength to cultivate their nation and their state in the proper way. We'll keep hoping those dreams will come true.



Anna: A great man with a great footprint.





Helje: Emotions are sky-high, because Mrs. Tiia is in the picture with her grandson. A true grandma!



Pille: Cool little punk!

Karin: ...disco sucks, PUNK rules...

Piret: Tartu is stylish. :) I always get good ideas here and I never want to leave. I believe that the spirit of Tartu does exist, and the spirit is a MAN. :)



Tiia: From the deck of the boat "Jõmmu" to large stages...

Aivo: Miss Tartu.



MalleElina: The twins' young guys...



Karmen: Karlova is my Tartu.



Eda: Tartu – greater from within than from the outside. Fractal. Man-sized. Time flows more softly here. A little wooden town (the band Jäääär was spot on about Tartu!) that loves its poets and madmen.



Mari: Tartu is special. I love Tartu's colours and old buildings.



Mihkel: Sometimes, it's nice just to stop and stand around for a bit to enjoy the colours of life. That can be done here, because there always seems to be enough time to simply stop on a street corner and wait.



Nele: There are people in Tartu because Tartu loves people. And that's good.



Kristel: I'm always reminded of one late night in midsummer in connection with Tartu. Really warm. The kind of night to meet a couple of good friends on a café patio. You talk about this and that. A couple more friends walk past. You wave. They join you. You walk down the main street to the next café, chatting and laughing. Old friends once again. A few new ones, too. You laugh nonstop as you talk. You walk down the main street a while later. There's already a whole bunch of friends now. Time has ticked several hours into the new day, unnoticed. Only very good and very, very good music is playing at an incredibly awesome club, because it's run by friends. It's mighty great to be here.



Mihkel: As autumn arrives, it's really great to settle down in the company of a good book. Some books are even so good that you really just can't wait to get home from the library.





 **Markku:** There are different historical layers in the city of Tartu, and it's like rural living every now and then. A very pleasing richness!

 **Veronika:** My lovely backyard, where there's not enough room for all the snow in winter. :)



 **Helen:** Tartuans have strange sayings – things 'hinge on' other things, i.e. things depend on other things. Tartu's snow starts 'to stick' – who's ever heard such a weird way of saying things? Snow packs! Tartuans didn't understand when I said I lost my pen cap. They didn't even know what that is.

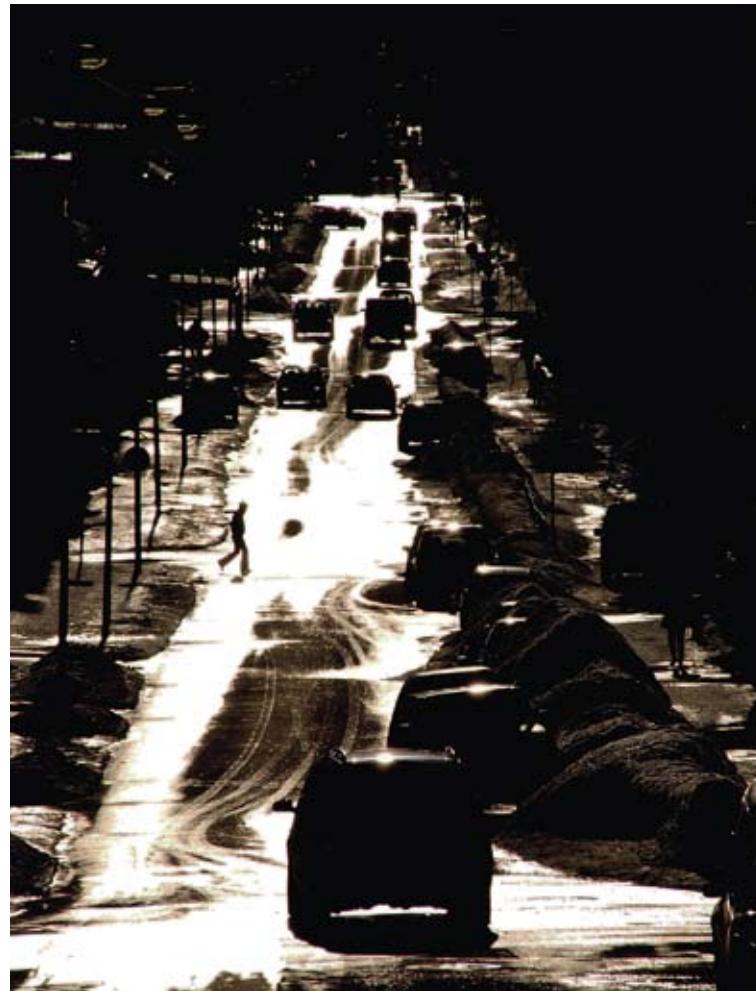
 **Piret:** Cow food rolls in the Siili residential district (where there's about one house?). :-)

 **Eevald:** Long live agriculture in Tartu!



Nele: I'll never forget those winters: those cold, so cold, frigid, biting winters – but to sit in front of a fire crackling in the stove at the same time...

Liis: You know winter is here when the scent of stoves in Karlova's wooden houses works its way in through the window.



Juhani: White is black, black is white. The sun is a miracle.



Piret: Tartu, my dear wooden hometown... it's pure art. :)

Marek: Based on this picture, you could say that it's not just made of wood, but of a good amount of tin as well! ;-)

Piret: Marek, ...and snow and love for your country... :) I love this Little Wooden Town. :)



Jaime: Negative temperatures don't count for anything here. Winter's just one more reason to be outside.



Marre: This little stretch of Anna Haava Street is one of my favourites; there's something poetic in it. I guess it's because of the openness.

Anneli: A city that's almost not like a city.



Ingrid: Bicycles' Winter Slumber
Jaan Kaplinski

When the weather outside is cruel
and it's all snowbound and sombre,
the children's bicycles in the shed
are sleeping their winter slumber.

All through winter they never wake,
they never even turn over –
so very deep asleep are they
and warm, no snow whatsoever.

There are park paths in their dreams
as well as streets that are hushed
and a road leading through the woods
where they once rode as they wished.

But when the snow is gone for good
and crocuses peep out from under,
the children's bicycles in the shed
wake up from their winter slumber.
[---]

– translated by Ilmar Lehtpere

Karin: For me, the Tartu spirit
is like this: living in a red house
with peeling paint, and riding
to lecture on a yellow "spinning
wheel".

Kätlin: Volli's bike.

Anna: Is that the orange bike
that was stolen, like in the
children's book?



Un Ciudadano B: Cartesian
perfection...!



Nele: There was one morning in June, an early morning, when we all went swimming together and the fog swam back towards us... And everyone was happy. =)



Mihkel: Once during a flood, it was great to watch how the owner of a rubber raft docked his vehicle to a tree in the parking lot. After making his purchases, the old man (who had a magnificent moustache) waded out to the raft with his shopping bags, untied it from the tree, pulled an ice cream cone out of a bag, and started slowly licking the ice cream melting in the spring sun – just drifting along with the current. Now that's the way to shop.



Lill: And there was that one night at the end of May, when we hit the water with a rubber raft from the shore by the agricultural university highrise and made it out the other end of Tartu by morning. There was the kind of fog, where you couldn't see from one end of the raft to the other. And those morning fishermen.



Andres: My Tartu is the “quack-quack-quack” sounding from the water as I walk over a bridge across the Emajõgi River at night.



Kristin: Tartu has a remarkable number of jackdaws and eager paws.



Dagmar: How I miss those Tartu birds here in Tallinn... There's a park and there's wide-open spaces, but it's strangely quiet. For a while, I couldn't figure out what was bothering me, and then I realized – there are no damn birds!



Karin: Oh, how afraid I was of those crows in the parks when dusk settled...



Pärtel: Crow machine.



Margit: My home street and our daily visitor in the yard. :)



Dagmar: Rebel cat.



Pille: So which came first – the cat or the squirrel?



Jaime: It seems as though even when things change, they still stay the very same.



Ester: In the wishing bush.



Lea: I remember candy-covered raisins from my childhood... the exact same kind, the same colours, the same shapes. So yummy! :)



Kaarina: You can do anything with dad on Saturday...



Karolina: My Tartu is a town, where EVERYTHING is within walking distance! ALL of it is very important – friends, the city, beauty, young people, old people, etc.



MalleElina: Buses aren't running yet – a lone wanderer in a suburb somewhere...



Mari: Tartu makes me – a hopeless sleepyhead – get up at three o'clock in the morning to take pictures of the mystical fog rising from Anne Canal.



Marge: I'm reminded of one night, when while walking outside with a friend, we started talking about the Vantsilla ship towering over the city. I was thinking – 'Vantsilla', that's like Godzilla or some other monster, and is sailing in a huge ship towards Tartu at this very moment. Looking towards the bridge a second later, I realized that my friend meant the ship at the top of the cable bridge ('vantsild' actually means 'cable bridge' in Estonian). I smile every time that I go across or past that bridge.



Mihkel: That's not Tartu, is it?



Aire: Of course it's Tartu! :)



Mihkel: So it is. That bridge is too similar to one in Riga.



Maarika: That is, when you happen to have a free day. Come to where I work – Kadri and I will tell you where that picture was taken. :)



Heidi: Midnight disco in front of the library. :)

Annet: That picture actually stirs up very positive memories and emotions from nightly exam cram sessions in the library. :)

Piret: But I'm actually reminded of the same fountain without the light show, and with a swimming Milius instead. :) Saw it with my own eyes! :)

Riina: A rainbow on Earth!

Aire: Looking at that picture, I remember all of the parking tickets collected near the library and the never-ending frenzy with books and the coatroom women. :D

Ene: Tartu – the Glamour City!



Mihkel: Once, when we were young boys, my brother and I went skiing in the woods at Ihaste. Our mother said we wouldn't get lost, because the lights from the greenhouses would lead us home. But those lights were in every direction! Gliding around Ihaste's seemingly endless clumps of forest for already some time, we started discussing how to best implement the survival knowledge we gained from reading *The Deerslayer*. Luckily, we didn't need those skills, because the lights of Luunja got us out of trouble – we located our ski tracks coming from home, and were able to find our way back on them.



Marge: A distant glow shines all the way to our home as well. We call it the Cucumber-Growing Glow.



Kristin: My first emotion upon moving to Tartu 8 years ago was seeing the mushroom-cloud-shaped beam of light towering up from Luunja. It had an especially apocalyptic effect when driving into the Annelinn panel-housing district (my first home in Tartu was at the back of Annelinn). That first strange/frightening scene that unfolded with the green glow on a dreary autumn evening has switched into a happy familiar sight when driving into Tartu, telling you that home is right around the corner.





 **Liis:** My 15 seconds of f(sh)ame.

 **Marika:** ...I'm sitting alone... others are walking... waiting for boys... just one's watching me (sung to a tune by the band Ursula).

 **Heidi Maarja:** Spring's already in the air!

 **Kaarina:** What's taking him so long?

 **Ivo:** Well, look, Tartu – Estonia needs you...

 **Maris:** Emajõgi's where it's at... Emajõgi's where it's at... Emajõgi!!!



Kaarina: Why just fiddle away; let's have the instruments make some money.

Tinka: How Kihnu isle folk came 'round to Tartu.

Inessa: ...I don't know why they came 'round Tartu, but their names are Liis and Martin...

Lilian: This picture was taken at the Europeade folklore festival held last summer in Tartu.

Liisa: Hung out with a friend at a simula to waste time eruditely. Tense old men were losing to the Master; handsome, tall, chic. Amid those tense old men was a little boy trembling with excitement – the crowd darling. When he was one of the last opponents to be forced to concede defeat, I felt so sorry for him that I'd have wanted to throw an egg at the Master. So what that he's handsome, tall and chic.

Ingmar: Actually, the Master is a guy from Viljandi; and I think a professor from Lithuania is sitting at the other end of the table.





Ree: Every Tartuan has a picture of him- or herself, of friends or acquaintances next to that sculpture. :)

Idu: It was great when the newspaper *Postimees* once took a poll of Tartu residents, asking how they like "Father and Son"... and one old lady thought they sure are only proper in front of Anne Sauna. :)

Marge: There's often one other fantastic sight near "Father and Son". A nice dog couple – probably schnauzers – often sits on the stairs of the house opposite the sculptures. One is big, and the other is small. Silent, waiting. The big one guarding the little one, and vice versa.

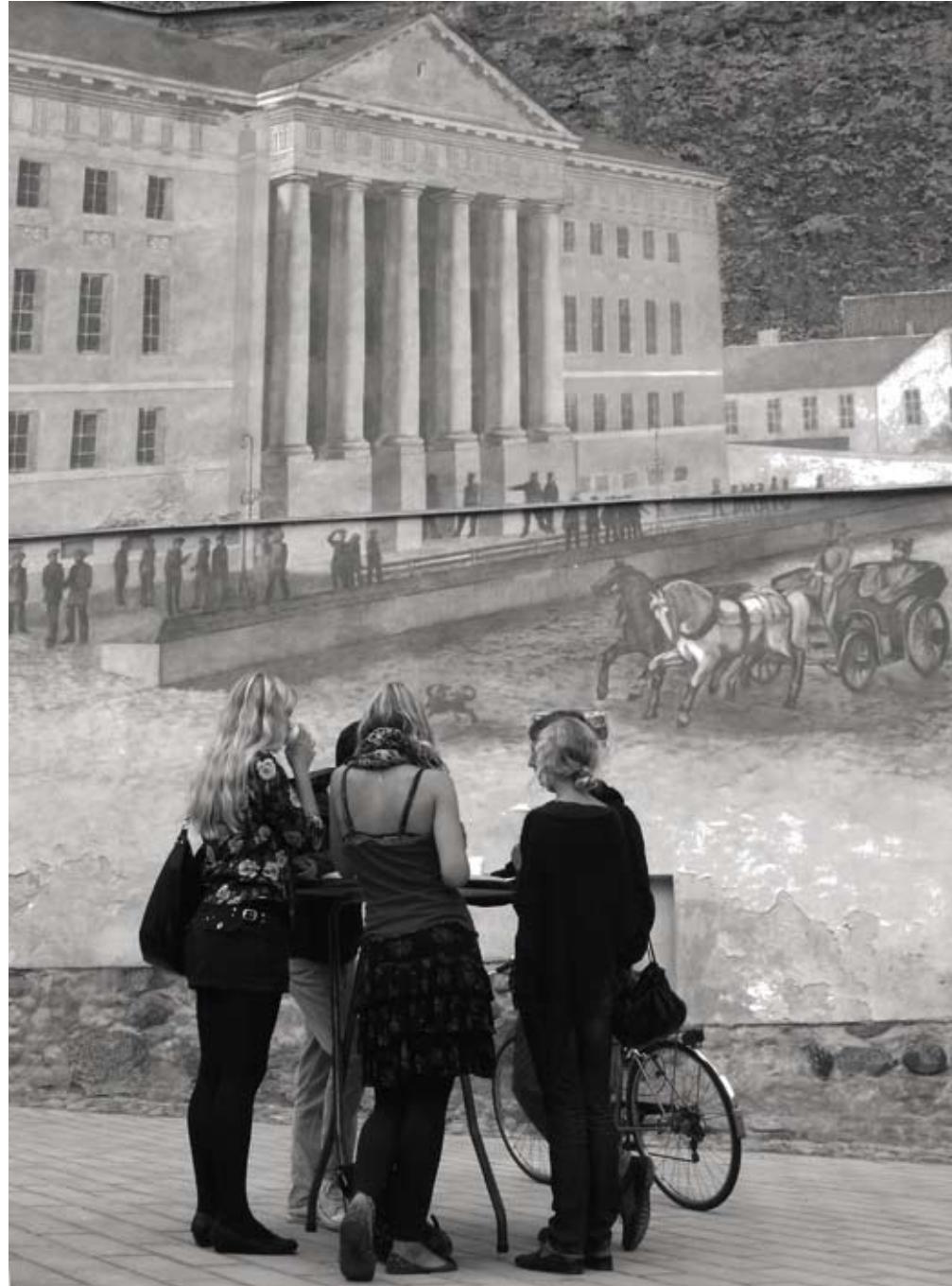


Karin: I remember rushing home from the university graduation ceremony in the rain, holding flowers and a soaking diploma.

Lea: Rain washing up the hillside, it's spring around the town...

Anneli: Lace and sneakers.





MalleElina: ...let's meet in front of the main building!

Vilve: Under the clock!

Tania: The buildings remember time's story...



Alice: I fell in there once. Was afraid to go home.

Merily: I learned how to swim there when I was a kid.



Tiiu: I like to head downtown from Tartu Train Station and stop by most of the second-hand stores along the way. Last time, took along a stylish St. Martin's coat from HOT – polka-dotted, with a scarf collar and buttons fastened in the shape of a flower. 10.90. Cool!

Katrin: A frozen moment of old and young Tartu...



Pille: Volli, Vaike and Lembit.

Aitel: While the city atmosphere sets your pace of life in some places, in Tartu, you set that yourself.

Kiwa: thinking back now, at the beginning of the 90's – about '92, a drum set went on sale over there in the department store's music section (in the back-right corner). my (punk) band and I reacted quickly, and made it clear to our form mistress (who was a music teacher) that our band needed it. we managed to procure some money from the school, and went the next day to stand in line before the department store opened and see how at 9 o'clock in the morning, when the store opened up, it looked like a free-for-all with people trampling one another (luckily not over the drums, which we managed to get for ourselves; although it caused a conflict within the band, because both the guitarist and the bassist realised upon seeing the drum set that the meaning of their life was grounded in becoming a drummer). there was a short, but quick tussle over it, and – well... the guitarist (that was me at the time) didn't become the drummer.



Karin: I know that old woman – she lives in Karlova. :)

Merike: She offers flowers in spring and summer; apples, plums and berries in autumn... and I've seen her there so many years.





Marre: Town Hall Square and Cathedral Hill are at the centre of Tartu living. Here, there are waitings, meetings, musings, rushings, memories, school-age shenanigans.



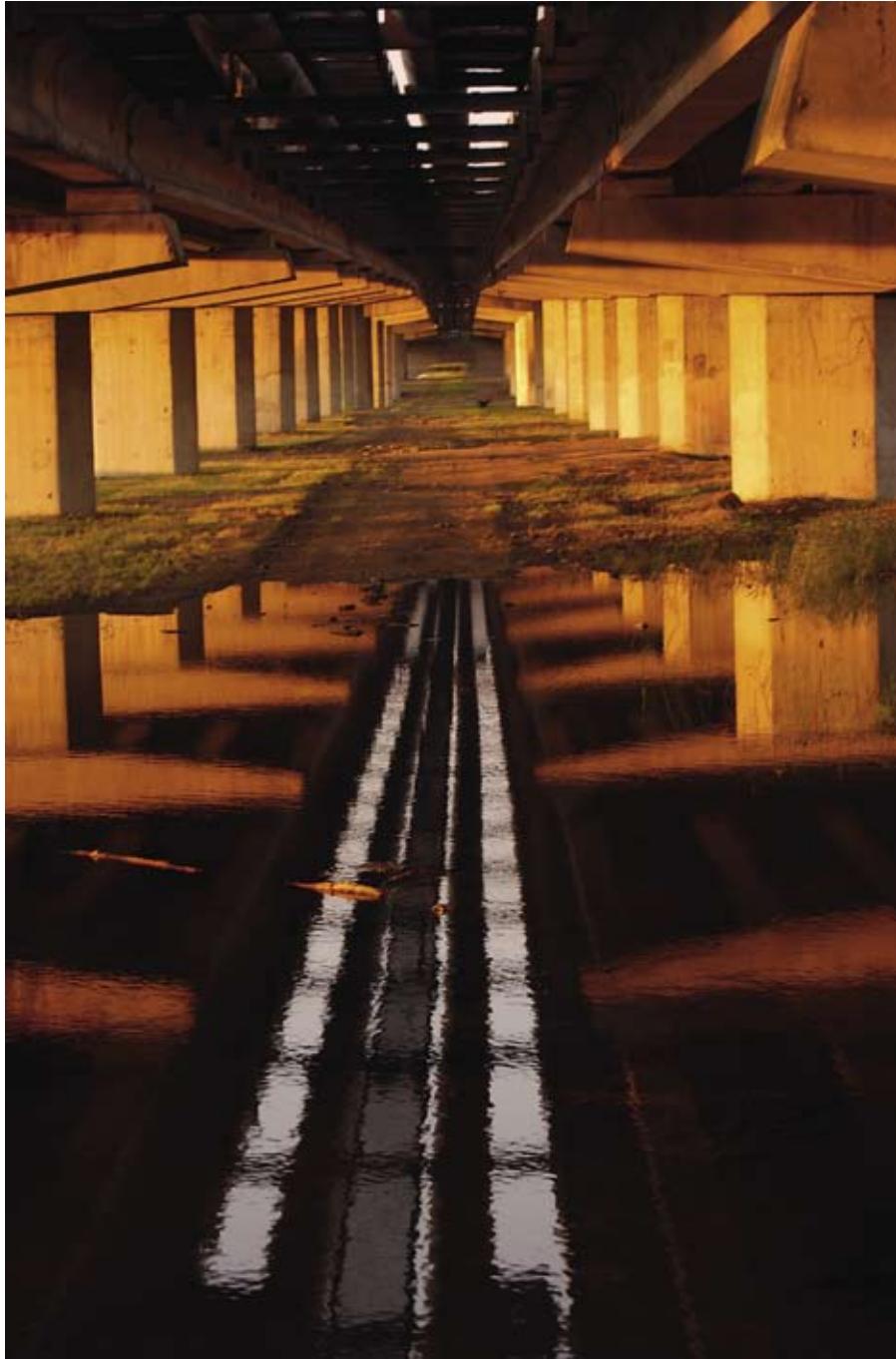
Marre: Tartu's letterboxes tell tales. Is each one the face of its owner?



Nele: One of Tartu's charms is in the fact that there are places, where not everything is uniform. Such places still exist.



Eve: Although I haven't lived in Tartu for 4 years, when I was recently starting to write my address on an envelope, I put the street name as it is now, but when I began writing the city name, I wrote Tar... before I realized what I was doing again. Plus – when I'm not thinking and have to say all of a sudden where I'm from or where I'm going, then I come from Tartu and am going to Tartu. :)



Silver: Years ago – one fun, early, summer Saturday morning, I went swimming there with a friend. :-)

Andres: The last time I was there was when those pillars were being built.



Eve: ...walking through Tartu, the cobblestones sing beneath my feet. :) Tartu is like a free city – like how there were free peasants and free cities in medieval times. It's good to breathe and good to think in Tartu, and you're allowed to be in peace, and it's the place to be.

Eveliis: Every year, there's a spring brimming with longing.



Kristina: Tartu has some kind of coolness that isn't anywhere else: like Tartu New Theatre, the drama festival, Boatbuilders' Yard, Estonian National Museum and – god – the Vanemuine ballet troupe (they are super-awesome), Ahhaa Centre, the 4D cinema. Completely unique things that aren't anywhere else and couldn't be! Fall on Cathedral Hill, spring along the Emajõgi, winter under the Christmas tree on Town Hall Square and drinking hot mulled wine in a café, and summer on the *lodi* boat or in the boatbuilders' yard... it sounds like utopia, like Gadgetville.



Gerly: Herne Shop commotion.



Mai: A city made of little crates.



Andres: Little boxes made of ticky tacky...



Jaagup: Taaralinn: the city of empty bottles.



Aivo: Without a doubt, that's Taaralinn!



Heidi Maarja: That installation, the Annelinn Lego TARTU-TAPTY-PARTY, would have lasted longer there, but human forces began carrying the crates off one by one!



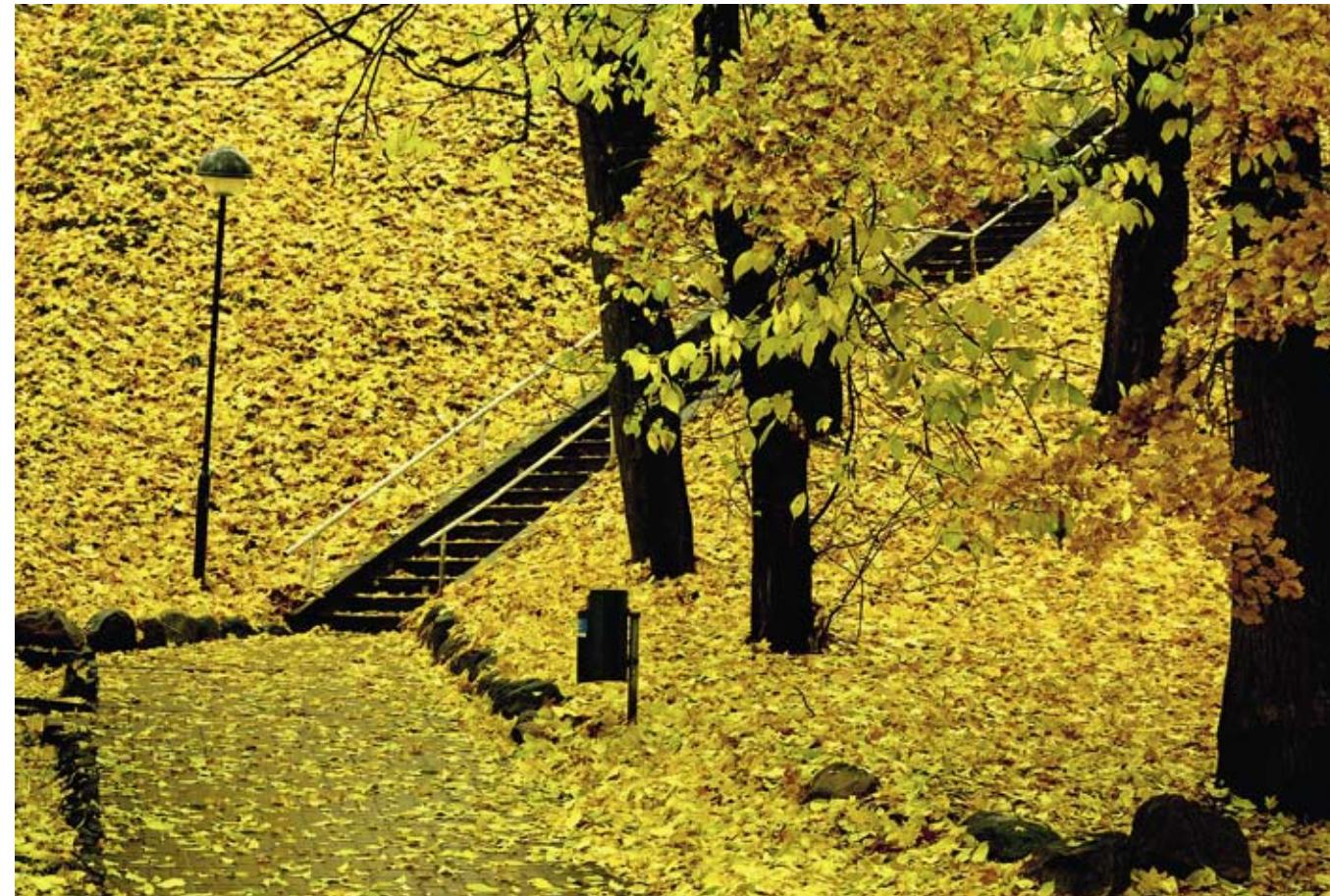
Uku: Tartu is a proper autumn capital.

Sipsik: Spotted my co-worker... :)

Suzan: Actually, that's not me there. :D That picture was taken in autumn, and I only bought myself the same coat in January. :D

Sipsik: So your identical twin has the same hat and the same scarf in addition to the same coat...? And what about the purse: is that identical, too?

Inga: I remember when I came here years ago, holding my bag (full of fear over how I'd manage), Tartu smiled at me... for real.



Anna: Ooh! Gold lying on the ground!

Ewa: And the trees, the trees ... and the trees, the trees ... are ... yellow ...

Häli: While I otherwise try to behave according to the age on my ID, when I see this sort of scene, I always roll around on the ground as if I'm back in childhood. Or like an animal on cloud nine. :D

Inga: The path of suffering to a former woman's counsellor, when I had to carry my 15-kg-heavier body up those stairs.

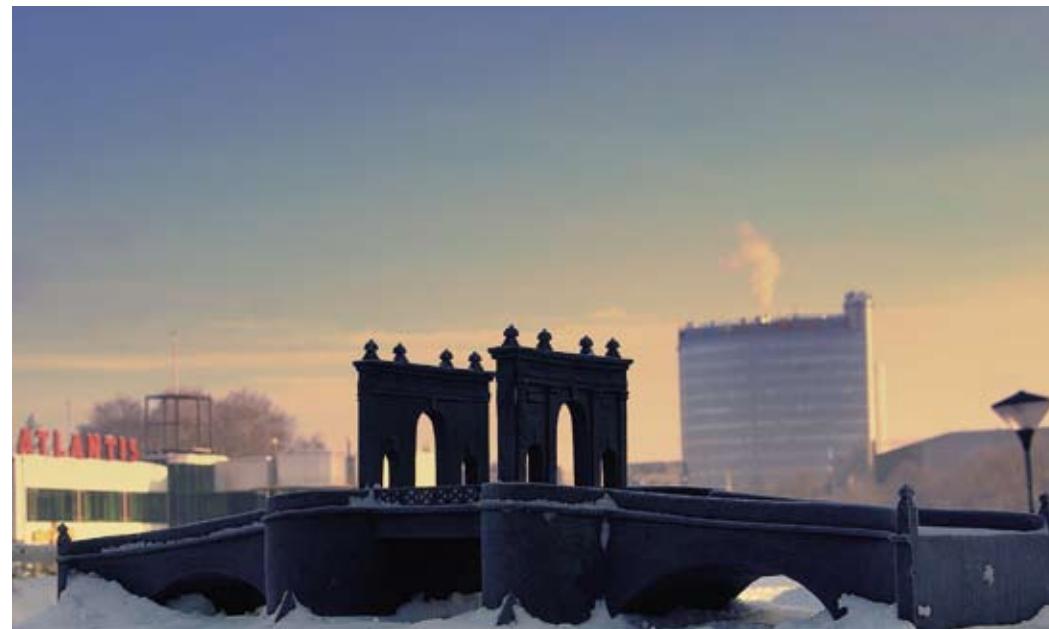
Heidi Maarja: When I worked on Cathedral Hill, this was the view from my office window every autumn. In spring, I looked forward to the trees turning green, and it was great to watch the couples in love, who didn't only go walking on Cathedral Hill.

Terje: "Hello!" I want to say to you, mountain above. Where are your eyes at?



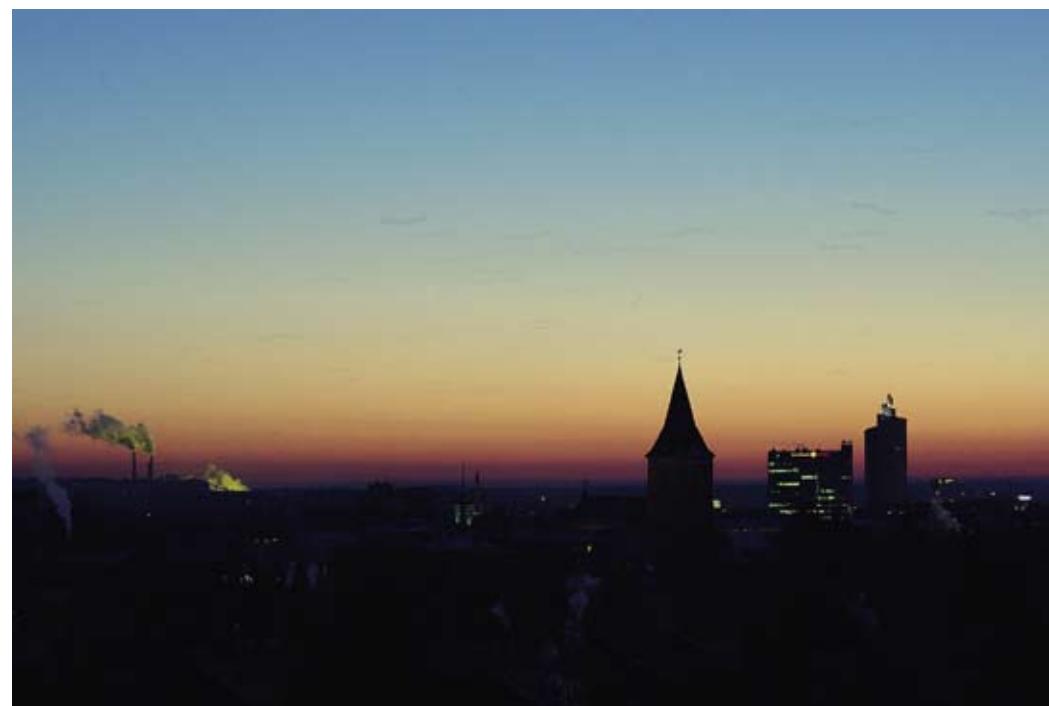
Sirje: What colouring! Pallas Art School!

Karin: A mirage of progress on the horizon.



Aime: ...a very old city with a rich history, which makes you feel like, oh – who all has lived here before me and what all has happened here before me, and I'm sure lucky to be living here now.

Andrus: And Stone Bridge was finally restored.



Urmas: Tartu awakes.



 **Marre:** Dazzling shards of sunlight in early spring lift your spirits and bring anticipation of spring-time into your soul. Picture taken in the Vaksali district.

 **Rain:** Old Light.

 **Inge:** ...reflections of the day...



 **Siiri:** Midnight is lit by the glow in the windows oozing from the shyness of the lampshades. There, a new life from a couple's love grows, Here, I make a trochee and a iamb play.

 **Sheila:** On Täche Street, a house I know with windows even late aglow... ;)



 **Ester:** Tartu's snail taxi.

 **Juhani:** 2 eyes, 100 eyes.

 **Liis:** I always think that Snail Tower could be colourful like the Hundertwasser houses.



 **Marina:** Two heads are two heads. :)

 **Anneli:** Put your legs together and make things happen. :)





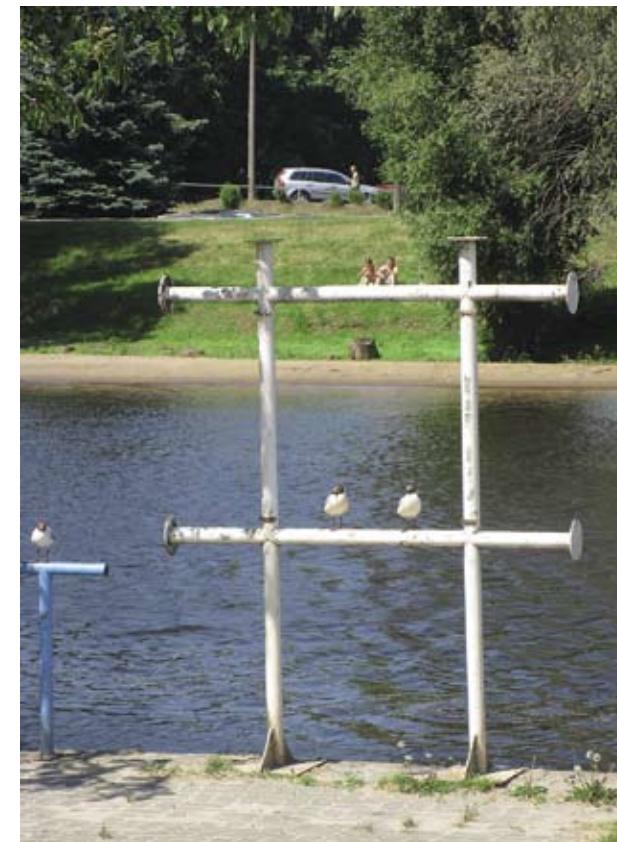
Hannes: That's definitely the best picture of Snail Tower!



Tiit: Upside-down Tartu. :)



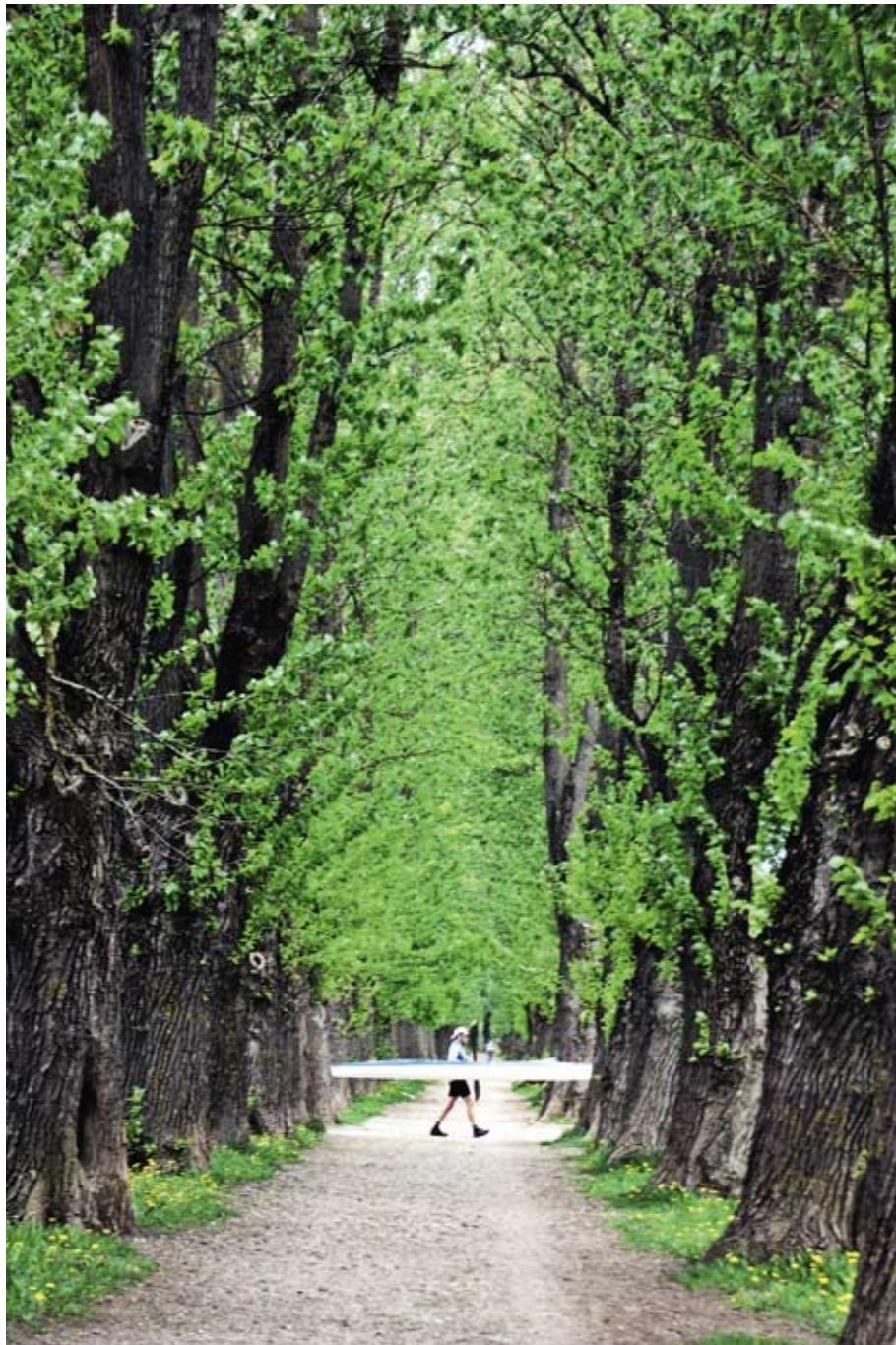
Auli: Tartu people have a beautiful look to them. There's no rush, no need to leave an impression. Everything is interconnected. The environment is well thought out. Even the highrises look like toys.



Anne: Two couples and a single.



Aire: "Tic-tac-toe".



 **Raini:** I've stopped and let people with kayaks cross the road quite a number of times. :)

 **Rain:** Old joy'n'dread...



 **Sa:** Such cosy nonexistence – the intersection of Kuu and Salme Streets in Karlova.

 **Dagmar:** That picture's scent hit me in the face from my screen with such a bang right now that it knocked me senseless...

This book emerged in cooperation with Tartuans. The city government asked individuals to send photos and texts in order to make a publication that contained the face of the people of Tartu – their genuine and true image. The people of Tartu – both current and former, locals and foreigners, all carrying the city in their hearts – sent hundreds of photos and musings. This is exactly how they see Tartu, these are the exact thoughts that formed when they think of Tartu.

Thanks go out to all authors, to Tartuans! Thanks also to those, whose photos and worthy thoughts didn't end up between the covers of this book! They're not lost, and one day, their time will come!

Photographers (the number in parentheses denotes the pages):

Aire Aasoja (53, right)

Jaime Banks (16, 22 top, 51 top)

Julia Dautova (4 bottom)

Malle Elvet (28, 29 bottom)

Kaspar Jassa (27 bottom)

Aet Kaare-Põiklik (5)

Marre Karu (17, 38 top, 39, 48)

Urmes Kirotar (19, 45, 46–47 all)

Andres Kukk (6 left, 11 both, 36, 37 top)

Lauri Kulpsoo (42 both)

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29 top, 30, 33 bottom, 37 bottom, 38 bottom, 43 top-right)

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