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Munger, Mark (2019). *Kotimaa: Homeland*. Novel. Duluth: Cloquet River Press. 363 p.

The novel *Kotimaa: Homeland* (2019) is a culmination of the Finnish American trilogy by the distinguished Duluthian author Mark Munger, a life-long resident of Minnesota (one of the U.S. regions most prominently influenced by Finnish migration) who often uses this state as a setting for his numerous novels, short stories and essays. Preceded by *Suomalaiset: People of the Marsh* (2004) and *Sukulaiset: The Kindred* (2014) (see the review of the latter in *Siirtolaisuus-Migration Quarterly* 1/2015), *Kotimaa* finishes the story of the familiar Finnish and Finnish American characters and their legacy on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact, the novel tells two stories, skillfully and intricately interwoven. Firstly, it is the story of Finns in the early 20th century who are forced to leave their homeland, pre-independence Finland, known then as the Grand Duchy of Finland. They depart from their country for a variety of reasons but all of them share the same vision of finding a better life for themselves and their children. A rocky road of immigration brings them first to the mines of Norway and later through the ports of the Great Britain to the other side of the Atlantic and eventually to the Upper Midwest. Yet even in the USA these Finns find not the hospitable "land of gilded streets" they have dreamt of but hard, dangerous and low-paid jobs in mines and lumber camps as well as the generally unfriendly host society. Dumped with other immigrants, Finns have

to go through discrimination and persecutions by mining companies and the general American public in order to win their right to call the new country their home. This part of the story reads like a good historical novel about Finnish settlers in the early 20th century which thoroughly traces their journey step by step from small Finnish farms to the mining towns of the Copper Country, Michigan, and does not hide their hardships and struggles. The author's extensive research into history provides the text with rich details and creates impressive immigrant saga skillfully mixing fact and fiction.

Secondly, the novel is also a breathtaking thriller and tells the story of today's Finns. This part of *Kotimaa* is set in 2017 and daringly addresses such burning issues as the European migrant crisis, the rise of far right populism in Europe and America, terrorism and extremism, and the Trump era. Now the roles are reversed for both Finns and Finnish Americans. Finland is a thriving country which is celebrating the first centennial of its independence. It has to deal not with the exodus of Finns from their homeland, but with the immigration to Finland and the ensuing growth of anti-immigrant sentiment. Meanwhile Finnish Americans are no longer regarded as suspicious "un-American" greenhorns (like it used to be in the early 20th century) but are considered rightful unquestioned Americans and one of the U.S. model ethnic minorities. In short, Finns are no longer immigrants but hosts who meet immigrants themselves. However, this new position presents them with new challenges and problems which have no easy solutions.

Kotimaa is a remarkable, enlightening and enticing read. It suits well both for those, who are interested in the history of Finland and Finnish America, and for those, who are simply looking for a good book. A great finale of the great series! The author's 16 years of research and writing were definitely not in vain.

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