SUMMARY

The photo series *"Luule and Maie"* is about two women – Luule and Maie – who are living in a nursing home. The project was in progress for six months, during which I visited the nursing home almost weekly. The idea originated from visiting my grandmother, who was suffering from dementia and spent her last months in such an institution. These visits made me reflect on the loneliness and isolation experienced by the people living there. The thought of a nursing home as a place where people go to wait for their death haunted me. I wanted to see how different individuals cope with life in a nursing home and to give them a chance to be seen and heard through photographs.

From all the people I met, I chose to focus on Luule and Maie because of their contrasting characters. Maie is very expressive, loves colourful clothing, and enjoys wearing distinctive accessories. Luule, on the other hand, is reserved and has a deep passion for reading and crocheting.

The written part of the thesis consists of four chapters. First, I describe the working process, starting from my relationship with documentary photography to taking pictures in the nursing home. The second chapter is dedicated to Luule, where I describe our relationship and the most significant events that have shaped her journey in the nursing home. In the third chapter, I focus on Maie, giving an overview of her personality and her life both before and during her time in the institution. The fourth chapter explains the final selection of photographs.

As the creative component, I present ten photographs—both film and digital—printed in size 13 × 18 cm and displayed in colourful velvet frames that resemble the frames we traditionally use at home to hold cherished memories. However, seeing the bed of a person who has just passed away inside such a frame may seem ironic or even unsettling. My intention with that is to show how death and loss are natural parts of life.

During the six months of visiting the nursing home regularly, I have learned what it means to be noticed, listened to, and understood. I have also gained a deeper awareness of the importance of individuality, self-expression, and freedom.