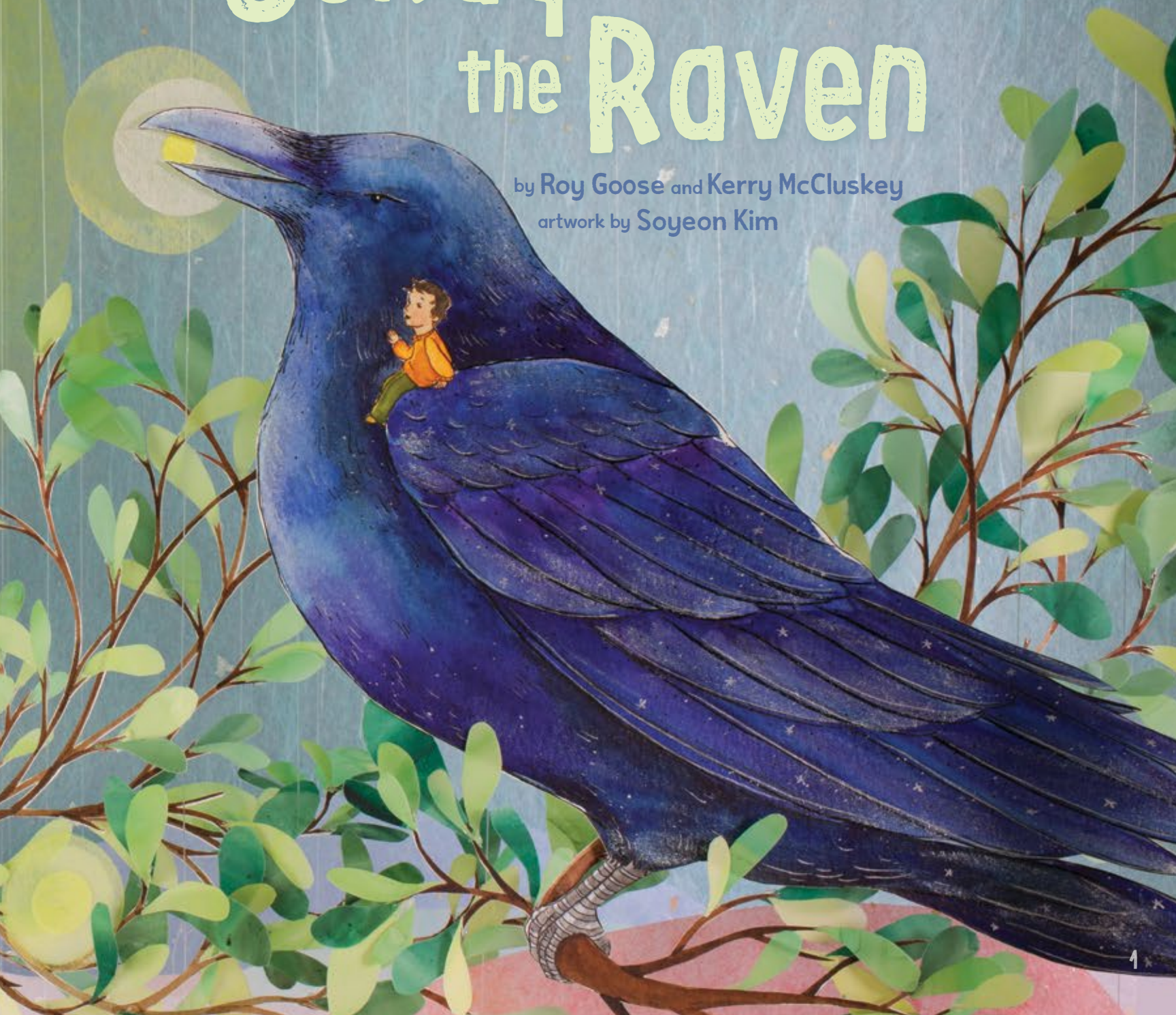


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# Sukaq and the Raven

by Roy Goose and Kerry McCluskey

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In a tiny community called Apex in Nunavut, there was a boy named Sukaq who was sweet and fast and who had an imagination that led him on all sorts of adventures.





Sukaq loved listening to stories before bed, because sometimes the stories followed him into his dreams. He would curl up beside his anaana and listen to her as he drifted off to sleep.

His favourite story was about the raven creating the world. It always gave him the best dreams because he imagined he was flying high in the sky on the raven's wings.





Anaana began, "This was a bedtime story that I heard from a friend of mine, who heard it from his grandmother, who also heard it from someone else. This story is very, very old. One day, there was a raven flying all by himself. This was an absolutely enormous raven: the biggest raven that ever, ever existed."

This is the part of the story that excited Sukaq the most. As he listened to his anaana, he closed his eyes and imagined himself sitting on the giant raven's back, right between its wings, holding on tightly, climbing higher and higher. As the raven and Sukaq flew into the dark night sky, it started to snow.





The raven spread his wings and said, "I'd sure like to rest. I've been flying forever."

The absolutely enormous raven started to glide. As he glided, snow gathered on his wings and he tipped over to one side. Sukaq could feel himself tipping to one side with the raven, and he dug his hands even deeper into the raven's feathers. He caught cold snowflakes on his tongue and laughed as the raven glided through the sky. What a ride!









The snowball gathered more snow and got so big the raven could land on it. It was dark and cold, but the raven created a place where he could land and rest his wings. Sukaq tucked himself into the fold of the raven's wing, shivering with the cold and excitement. He listened as the raven talked.

"I have to have light. It's too dark. I need to see," the raven said.



So the raven pecked on the ground and a plant started growing. The raven could see something very bright growing inside the plant. The raven grabbed the bright object and flung it into the sky. That became the sun. Sukaq squinted against the glare, but he was glad for the warmth and the light.







Later, as the sun set, the raven said the night was too dark and he needed light to see. Sukaq was glad because even though he was a very brave boy, he was still a little bit afraid of the dark. The raven pecked at the ground and another plant came out of the earth. There was a silvery light inside the plant. The raven grabbed the shiny object and flung it into the sky. That became the moon. Sukaq loved the moon, especially when it was big and full, as it was now.

The raven found his roost for the evening and soon went to sleep with Sukaq tucked safely under his wing. As Sukaq drifted off, his makeshift bed of raven feathers felt just as comfortable as his cozy bed at home.



When Sukaq and the raven awoke, the raven said, "I need a partner on earth."

He pecked at the ground and a third plant grew. He pecked at the plant and when it opened up, there was a human inside. The raven breathed life into the human's nostrils, and it became a woman.







The raven told the woman, "I am your partner."

The woman said, "No, you are not. You are a raven."

The raven replied, "Watch me." He stood straight up and his raven form folded back and a man appeared. His wings turned into a beautiful parka.





Sukaq's fingers let go of the man's parka and he fell to the ground with a thump so strong that it shook him awake out of his dream. He opened his eyes and looked at his anaana. He wasn't flying around, creating the world with a giant raven. He was tucked into bed.



“And that’s how the raven created the universe,” Anaana said. “Now sleep well, Sukaq. Tomorrow is another day with another adventure.”

And the boy who was sweet and fast and loved to dream fell back to sleep.





## Afterword

This is a story I heard from Roy Goose in 1999. I travelled to Inuvik, NT to record stories about ravens, and Roy was on my list of people to visit. I'd already known Roy for a few years and knew him to be an engaging and charismatic storyteller. He had many tales to tell, some of which appear in *Tulugaq*, a book published by Inhabit Media in 2013. Roy's creation story is pure magic and forms the basis of this story, *Sukaq and the Raven*. Roy told me he learned the creation story and many more from his great-grandmother, Naimee Mammayuk, who left Alaska and came to Canada to settle near Inuvik around 1910 with the Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Steffansson.

– Kerry McCluskey

**Roy Goose** learned many of the legends he knows from his great-grandmother, Naimee Mammayuk, who left Alaska and came to Canada around 1910 with the Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Steffansson. Roy passed his legends on to his children to teach them important life lessons and morals.

**Kerry McCluskey** has been working as a journalist and writer in the Arctic, telling the stories of the North since 1993. In 1999, she began travelling across the Arctic collecting stories, information, photographs, and artwork about ravens from Inuit, First Nations, and non-Aboriginal Northerners alike. *Tulugaq*, her first book, is the result of this research.

**Soyeon Kim** is a Toronto-based, Korean-born artist and art educator who specializes in work that merges fine sketching and painting techniques to produce three-dimensional dioramas. Her previous children's books include *Wild Ideas*, *Is This Panama?*, and *You Are Stardust*, for which she won the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award.



Sukaq loves to drift off to sleep listening to his mother tell him stories. His favourite story is the tale of how a raven created the world. But this time, as his mother begins to tell the story and his eyelids become heavy, he is suddenly whisked away on the wings of the raven to ride along as the entire world is formed!

This traditional legend from Inuit storyteller Roy Goose is brought to life through co-author Kerry McCluskey's jubilant retelling.



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