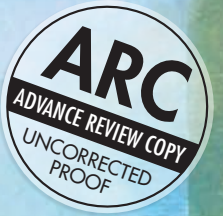


# GLUSKONBA

## AND THE MAPLE TREES



WRITTEN BY JOSEPH, JAMES, AND JESSE BRUCHAC • ILLUSTRATED BY AMY HOOK-THERRIEN

GLUSKONBA AND THE MAPLE TREES

JOSEPH, JAMES, AND JESSE BRUCHAC

7th GENERATION



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*Summertown, Tennessee*



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# DEDICATION

Dedicated to our next generation of storytellers:  
*Carolyn Rose, Jacob Bowman, and Ava Rae*



Long ago, when human beings were new to the world,  
the Creator gave them the gift  
of maple syrup.



Back then, all anyone had to do at any time of year was break a twig off a sugar maple tree and pure, sweet maple syrup would flow out. It was a very special gift indeed.



One day in the early summertime, Gluskonba, the one who had been given the power to change things, decided to go visit the Alnobak, the human beings.





It had been a while since he had seen them.  
He longed to see how they were getting along in the world,  
share some stories with them, and hear their laughter.



But when he arrived at their village,  
Gluskonba was surprised  
at what he found there.



He could not find a single human being, all the bark lodges were in disrepair, and weeds had grown up all around the village. It looked as if no one had been there for a good stretch of time.






Gluskonba was very worried. What could have happened to his friends? Had one of the old monsters of the land come and gobbled them all up?

As he was looking around for some kind of track  
or any other clue, he began to hear a strange noise.  
IMMMMMM, AHHHHHHH, IMMMMMM, AHHHHHHH



Curious what it was, Gluskonba followed this strange noise.  
IMMMMM, AHHHHHHH, IMMMMM, AHHHHHHH





“Could it be the sound of a sleeping monster?” Gluskonba thought to himself. He continued up a small hill, still following the strange noise, which was now getting even louder.  
IMMMMMM, AHHHHHHH, IMMMMMM, AHHHHHHH

When he reached the top of the hill and looked down into the valley below, he saw something he could hardly believe. All of the human beings were there, in a large grove of maple trees.



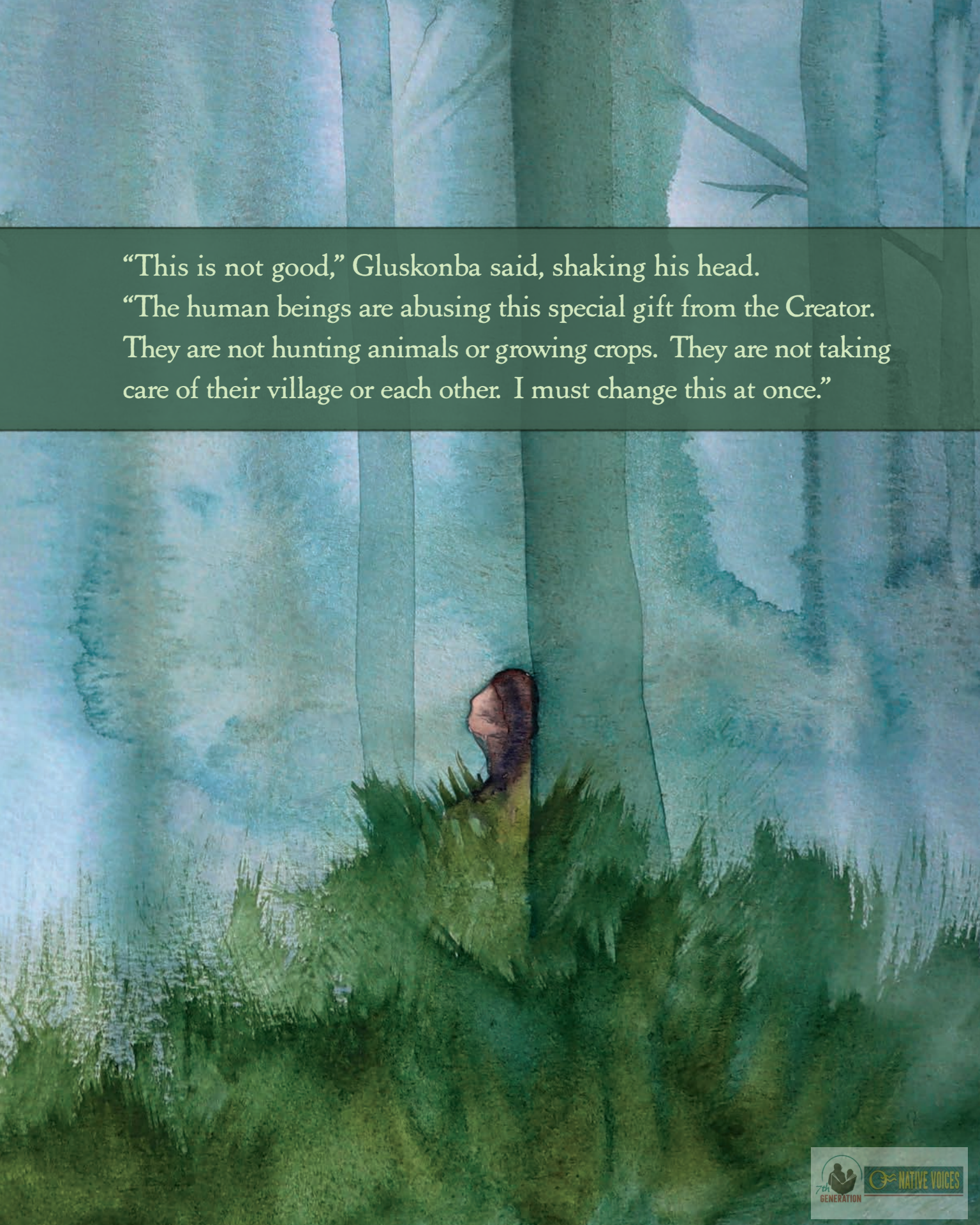
Each one had broken off a twig and was on their back.  
Eyes closed and mouths open, they were all enjoying  
the thick maple syrup that dripped into their mouths.

IMMMMMM, AHHHHHHH, IMMMMM, AHHHHHHH



Gluskonba could tell the people had been there for a long, long time. Grass had begun to grow up around them, and they had round bellies full of that sweet syrup.



The background is a painting of a forest. The trees are tall and thin, with a light blue-green color. The ground is covered in green grass. A person is standing in the grass, looking towards the trees. The person is wearing a dark hooded garment. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

“This is not good,” Gluskonba said, shaking his head.  
“The human beings are abusing this special gift from the Creator.  
They are not hunting animals or growing crops. They are not taking  
care of their village or each other. I must change this at once.”

Gluskonba stripped bark from a birch tree and fashioned  
a huge basket. Then he walked down to the river.



He scooped up water from the river in his basket and threw it into the air above the grove of maple trees, where it became rain.





As that rain fell on the tops of the trees, the water soaked in,  
working its way down and into each branch.  
Now what flowed out of the tree was no longer sweet syrup.

It was thin, watery sap. As soon as that liquid started dripping into the mouths of the people, they realized something was wrong.



They opened their eyes and jumped up.  
“Water!” they cried. “Yuck! Where did our sweet syrup go?”



Then they noticed Gluskonba standing in front of them,  
shaking his head in disapproval.



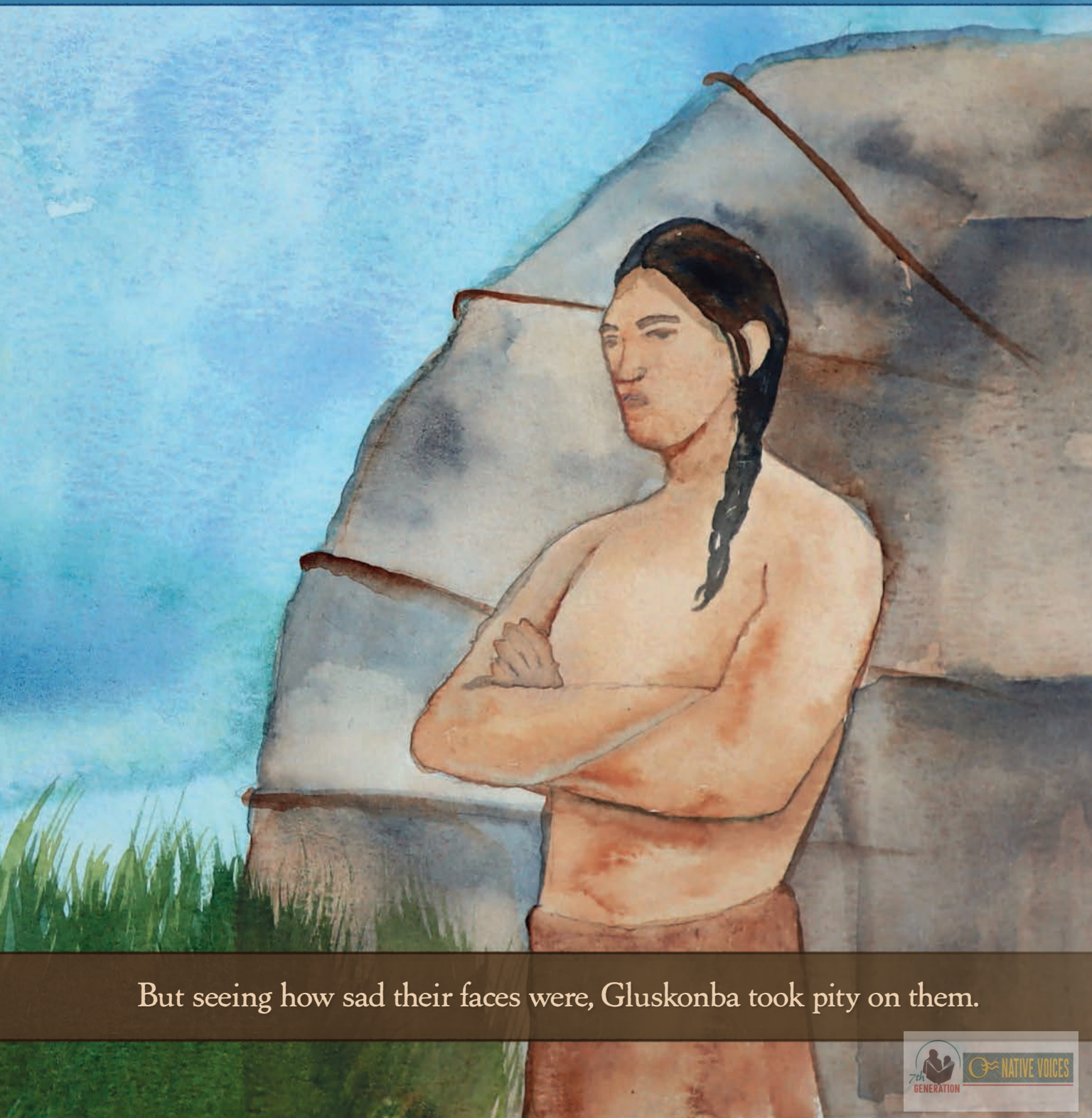
“What has happened to our maple syrup?” they asked.  
Thick syrup was stuck to their sad faces.



“You have abused this special gift given to you by the Creator,”  
Gluskonba replied. “No longer will you be able to get this pure  
maple syrup. You must now go back to your lodges and repair them.”



“You need to hunt the animals, gather plants, build your canoes and snowshoes, and do all the things that you were meant to do.”  
“You are right,” they said. “We will do as you say.”



But seeing how sad their faces were, Gluskonba took pity on them.

“You can still have maple syrup,” he said.  
“But it will no longer be so easy.”



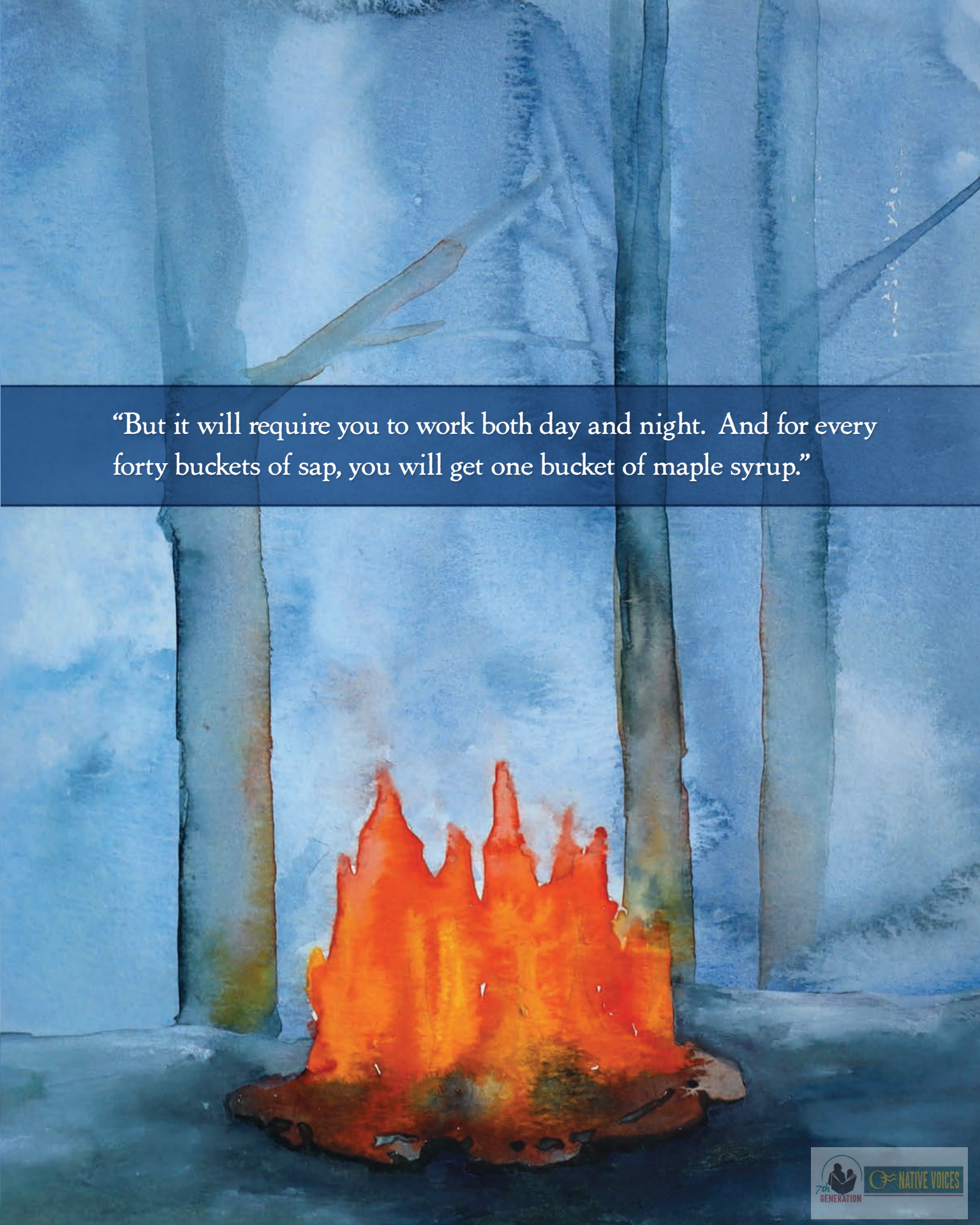
“Once a year, in the late winter, watery sap will once again flow from the trees if you cut carefully into the trunks to make a shape like two fingers held up and spread apart. When that sap flows, you must collect it in birch-bark buckets and pour it into hollowed-out logs.”





“You must also gather wood from the forest to make fires and then heat stones in those fires. By placing those stones into the hollowed-out logs filled with sap, you can boil down the liquid to make maple syrup.”

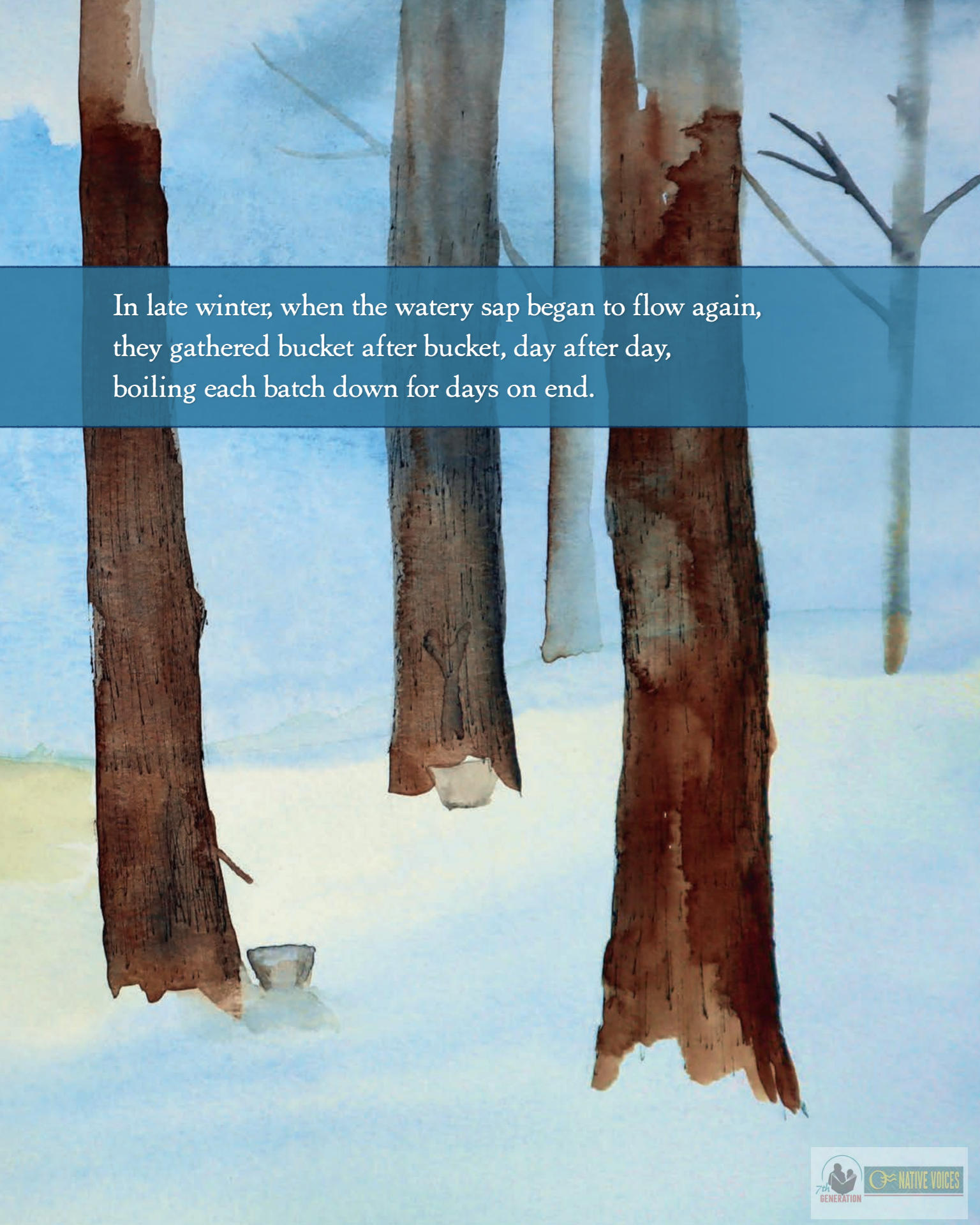


A watercolor illustration of a campfire in a forest. The fire is bright orange and yellow, with several tall, thin flames reaching upwards. It sits on a dark, irregular base. The background consists of vertical, textured strokes in shades of blue and teal, representing tree trunks and a misty or overcast sky. The overall style is soft and painterly.

“But it will require you to work both day and night. And for every forty buckets of sap, you will get one bucket of maple syrup.”

And so the people did as Gluskonba told them. They returned to their village and repaired it, took care of their crops, hunted and fished, and stored food for the winter. As they had done in the past, they worked together to survive.





In late winter, when the watery sap began to flow again, they gathered bucket after bucket, day after day, boiling each batch down for days on end.



Working together, just as Gluskonba had said, the people once again had their maple syrup. With smiles on their faces, they looked into each other's eyes and came to a realization.



By making it harder for them to harvest the syrup, Gluskonba had given them an even greater gift.

He had given them back each other.  
The reward of community, of people coming together  
for a common goal, was even sweeter than the sweetest maple syrup.



**T**ranslation from English to Abenaki and vice versa is complicated and often requires that significant changes be made to the grammatical structure to make the translated text true to the unique patterns of its language. This is primarily because Abenaki is a holophrastic language in which a single word functions as a phrase or sentence.

Rather than allowing either language to be diminished due to their disparities in foundational structure, we have included two separate tellings of our story. One is drawn from English and the other is drawn from Abenaki. The differences in communication styles between the two languages are more clearly illustrated using this method. It also helps avoid literal translations that are not only often hard to read but also hard to understand.

The English-based version offers an easy-to-read telling. The Abenaki-based version is especially valuable for anyone who is actively involved in language reclamation efforts, since it authentically represents the Abenaki language. Both versions are faithful to the heart and the message of the story.





Nôwad / k'milgonna / senômoziak / pôgwizogalosôbôn.  
Kwanigadek / kadawesmida / sogalosôbôn / w'kiziba poskwena  
beskaôdwenis / ta / sogalosôbôn / bagebatasten.

Long ago / we were given / maple trees / and pure maple syrup.  
All year round / if someone was thirsty / syrup / they could break off  
a twig / and / syrup / dripped out.



Salakiwi / Klozkôba / w'kiston / odokawôt / alnôbaa.  
Paiôt / wd'odanawôk / sigwagen.

Once / Klozkôba / decided / he should visit them / the human beings.  
When he came / to their village / it was empty.



Anigenop / w'wiwnwigwômenowôl.  
“Tôni / pmôzowinnoak?” / Klozkôba / wd'elaldamop.

It had grown up with trees and vegetation / between their homes.  
“Where are / the people?” / Klozkôba / he wondered.



Niga / w'nodamen / msinasatôgwat / senômoziikok.  
Wd'elossan / kpiwik / ni / w'meskawôna / pmôsowinnoa.

Then / he heard it / a sighing sound / from in the maples.  
He goes / to the woods / and / he finds them / the humans.

Mziwik / lesinobanik / nagwakwa / kbasizekowal.  
Kizi w'boskwenowôl / beskaôdwenisal / ni sogalosôbôn /  
w'chigitowônnô / bagebatasten / wd'alômdonakwôk.

All of them / they were lying / under the trees / their eyes closed.  
They had broken off / twigs / and syrup /  
they let / it drip / into their mouths.

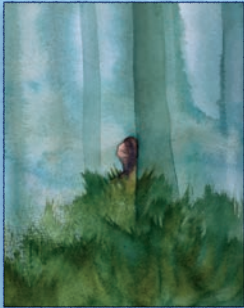




**Wikaoak! / Wd'adebaodepkwanowôl / ta anigon / w'wiwniwôk.**

They were fat! / They had tangled long hair / and the land it grew up  
with vegetation / around them.

**W'gwanosminôp / sogalosôbôn / adoji msinasaadit.  
“Nda wligenowi” / Klozkôba / idamop.**



While they drank it / the maple syrup / they sighed.  
“Not good is it” / Klozkôba / said.

**Ni Klozkôba / w'maskwakan / ni  
w'kiziton / maskwainoda.**

Klozkôba / peeled the bark from a birch tree / and  
he made it / a birchbark container.



**Ni w'nôdaziban / sibok.**

**Ni w'zogenadawan / mziwik / wskidsenômoziikok.**

He went to dip water / from the river.

He poured it on / all of them / on top of the maple trees.



**Ni sogalebihlôn / majipôgwat / ni / pmôzowinnoak / wd'abinak.  
“Kagwi / Ila?” / nadodemaak. / “Tôni / k'zogalimelassesemna?”**

The maple sap became / bad tasting / and / the people / they sat.  
“What's / happening?” / they asked. / “Where is / our sweet syrup?”



**“K'wikaohlabôp / ta / k'zazigôdahlabôp,” / Klozkôba / idamop.**

**“Wzômi / k'negemôwziba / kiôwô wji. / Nikwôbi / kd'achowi /  
melikalokanô / waji / wajônemenôakw / sogalosôbôn.”**

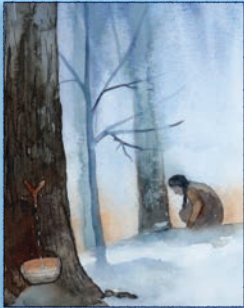
“You have become fat / and / you have become lazy,”

“Too much / your living was easy / for you. / Now / you must /  
work hard / in order to / have / syrup.”



**“Kd’achowi / maanemenô / sogalebi / msalinodaikok / ta k’zogenanôl / amasolemenikok.”**

“You must / collect it / maple sap (sugar water) / in many containers / and pour them / into dugout logs.”



**“Kd’achowi / maanemenô / awazonal / ta / k’wlibiponsanô wji / zogelozwôganal / senal / enni iolil / kd’awakatonôl wji / zigosaaqw / sogalebi / wji / sogalikawôgan.”**

“You must / collect it / firewood / and / make good fires for / cooking / stones / which / you use them to / boil it down / the maple sap / for / maple sugar making.”



**“Chaga / k’paamizigosa / ta / noskito / wazôli / k’wajônôbnaji sigwan / k’kizi sogalipi!”**

“If / you boil it down more / and / add / snow / you will have left over (what is left after melting or boiling away) / maple sugar you can eat!”



**“Kanwa / nikwôbi / ibitta / pazegweda / negwejigadenewaiwi / sogalebin lijowahazo / zigwaniwi / sogalikasek ahlit piligadek / wjiji / kd’alamikamenô wji / magawôgan / senômoziikok.”**

“But / now / only / once / during every year / the maple sap will flow / in the spring (the melting away time) / in April (the sugar maker moon) marking when the new year begins / in order that / you will be grateful for / the gift / from the maple trees.”



**“Taachi / kd’alamikôwadiba.” / Llaki io askwaga / nikwôbi.**

“And also / you will be thankful for each other.” / So it is this way still / now.

**JOSEPH BRUCHAC** is a Native American author from Greenfield Center, New York, and a citizen of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation. He earned his PhD in comparative literature from the Union Institute & University and began writing to preserve Native American stories and pass them along to his sons. Today, Joseph is a professional storyteller and writer and has received many awards and honors. His work is often drawn from his Native American heritage and the Adirondack region of New York State. Joseph has written more than 180 books, and he's still going strong. He plays several instruments, including the hand drum, Native American flute, and the double wooden flute. He often performs with his sons, James and Jesse, and still lives in the house in Greenfield Center where he was raised by his maternal grandparents.

**JAMES BRUCHAC** is a citizen of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation and director of the Ndakinna Education Center. He has a bachelor's degree in American studies from Skidmore College and is an award-winning author, traditional storyteller, and outdoor educator. James is a lifelong martial artist and is a black belt instructor in both Kyokushin karate and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. For more than three decades, James has traveled around the country visiting countless schools, storytelling festivals, and environmental centers. He has run hundreds of youth camps and shared stories, wilderness skills, and Native American games through Ndakinna Education Center. A skilled musician, James performs with his father, Joseph Bruchac; his aunt, Marge Bruchac; and his brother, Jesse, as part of the Dawnland Singers. For more information, visit [jamesbruchac.com](http://jamesbruchac.com).



**JESSE BRUCHAC** is a citizen of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation. Jesse learned the language directly from the last generation of First Language speakers and has taught the language for over 30 years. Jesse is the director of Middlebury College Language School of Abenaki. He is also an adjunct professor at the University of Southern Maine and an instructor and language specialist at the Ndakinna Education Center.

A prolific songwriter, Jesse has released six albums and over 60 songs. Use of his original music has been a primary driver of thriving community-based language reclamation. He has shared the stage with Joanne Shenandoah, Bill Miller, and Kevin Locke; performed at Woodstock '94; and, as a member of the Dawnland Singers, opened for the Grateful Dead and Bob Dylan.

Jesse has also worked extensively in television, film, and radio as a language coach and has scored original music for National Geographic, Carnival Films, Discovery Channel, the Science Channel, Fox Entertainment Group, AMC, PBS, and BBC Radio 3.

**AMY HOOK-TERRIEN** grew up in Chelsea, Vermont, where she formed deep connections with the forests surrounding her. She studied art at the University of Maine in Orono, earning a BFA with a concentration in painting. After her graduation, Amy returned to rural Vermont to immerse herself in nature and painting.

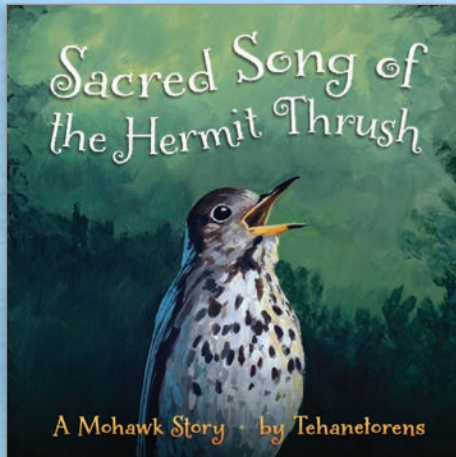


Amy has been featured in numerous publications and has shown her work in galleries throughout New England. In 2019, she was granted the Abenaki Artists Association's Artist of the Year Award, and since 2022 she has been an Artist-in-Residence at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, Vermont. Amy is currently focusing on watercolor landscape painting that portrays nature's tranquility and fragility.



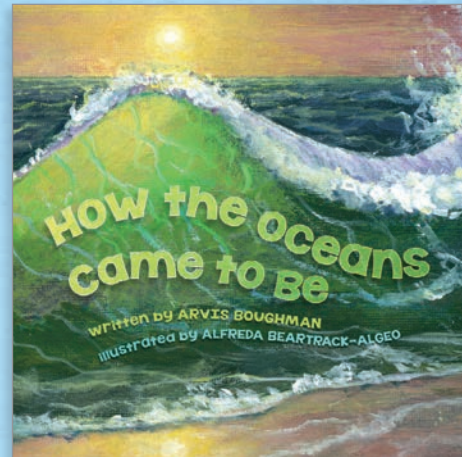


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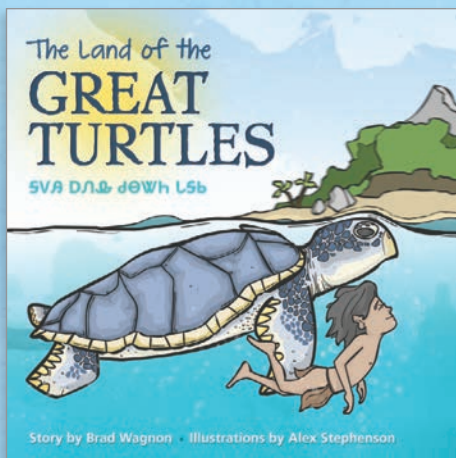
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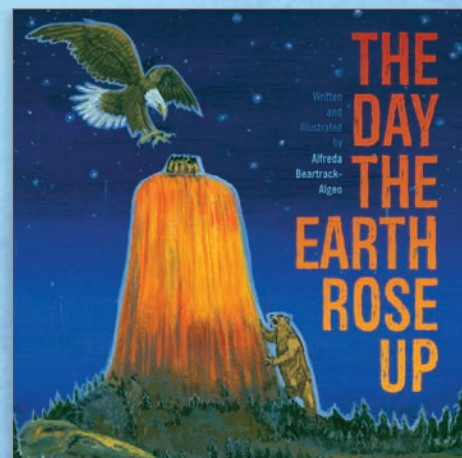
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