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∩∩чьььс Illustrated by トーム ダーの「こうれっ」 Germaine Arnaktauyok



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I was first exposed to Germaine Arnaktauyok's wonderful illustrations when I was a young teacher trainee. Books published by the Baffin Divisional Board of Education occasionally featured Germaine's illustrations. She quickly grew to be my favourite artist. When I became a teacher, I loved reading Inuktitut books to my students, and we read all the board's Inuktitut books from cover to cover in a school year. The children would get excited about who had written

and illustrated the books, and they became familiar with Germaine's work through these books. Germaine's illustrations contained characters that the children recognized. All the features and the attire of the characters were what the children were familiar with.

Later on, my angijurnguq (sister-in-law) at the time, who is Germaine's sister, put up framed prints of Germaine's work in her house. I wanted to get some prints for myself, as I loved her work. I started collecting Germaine's art, especially the work that draws inspiration from the oral legends that I grew up listening to. My two favourite pieces are depictions of the earth children and the woman who turned to stone because she did not want to marry.

I am so excited to have been involved in the creation of this book. I hope you will enjoy the short glimpse of each story shared. These stories will help you to understand our rich Inuit oral tradition. I also hope you enjoy the drawings themselves, as they make these stories come to life.

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ωΔ[\] [®]CH▷^ς∩ Louise Flaherty

Inuktitut Pronunciation Guide

angijurnguq — Older brother-in-law or older sister-in-law, pronounced "ang-nee-yo-nook."

ataata — Father, pronounced "a-ta-ta."

atii — A term meaning "let's go," or "let's do it," pronounced "a-tee."

iglu — A traditional snow house, pronounced "ig-loo."

igluit — Many iglus, pronounced "ig-loo-eet."

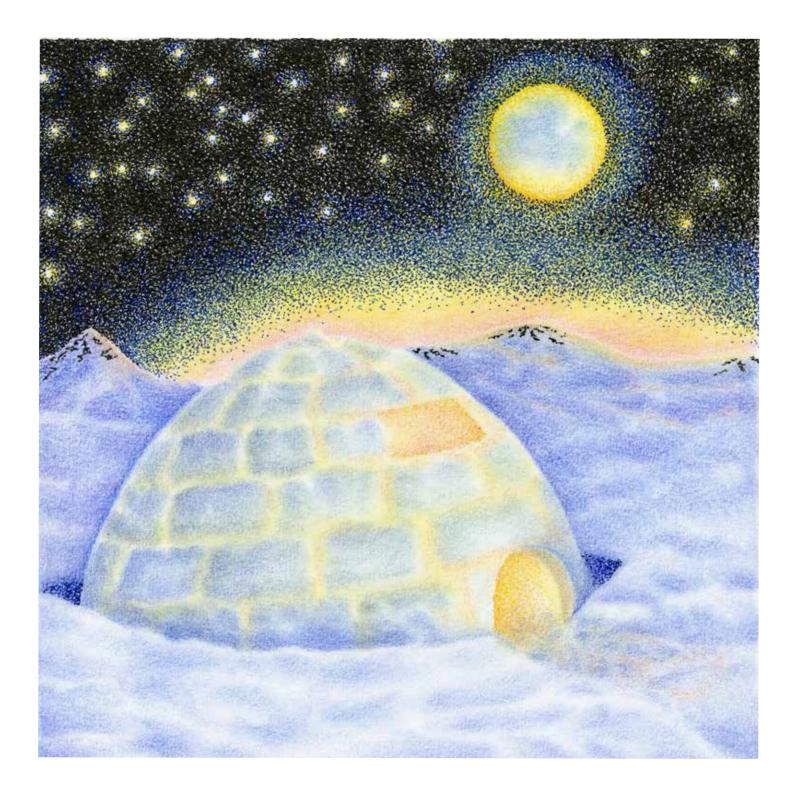
kuluit — A term of endearment meaning "dear ones," pronounced "koo-loo-eet."

nanurluk — A giant polar bear, pronounced "nan-oor-look."

ningiuq — Grandmother or old woman, pronounced "ning-yook."

qulliq — A seal-oil lamp, pronounced "koo-lik."

Tuniit — The people who lived in the Arctic before Inuit, pronounced "too-neet."



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The night was growing late, and Kudlu's children were not yet sleeping. So he sat down beside them on the sleeping platform and whispered, "Kuluit, why are you still awake?"

"We cannot sleep, *Ataata*. Please tell us a story!" Makpa asked.

"Yes, please tell us about what things were like long ago," Nyla added.

"A story about long ago? Do you mean when I was a boy?" Kudlu asked.



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"No, Ataata," Nyla answered. "I want to hear about when the mountains were giants and there was lots of magic in the world."

Kudlu looked at his two children and smiled. "Oh, you want a story about way back then? Atii, I will try to remember the stories my *ningiuq* used to tell about that time."

Although the wind could be heard whistling outside and the temperature was dropping, it was warm and cozy inside the *iglu*. The *qulliq*'s soft light danced across the snow walls of their home. The children pulled their blankets close, and Kudlu began his story.

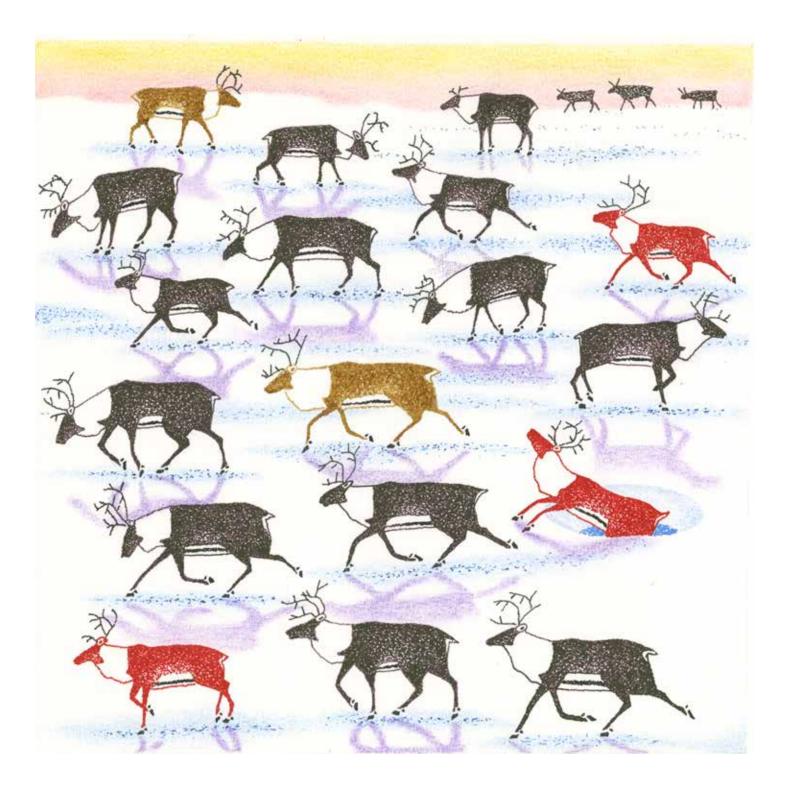
Way back then, when the world was very, very young, things were different than they are today. It is hard to imagine that time, as there was no night and day.

There was only a grey sky that never changed.

One day, a fox wanted darkness so it could steal from others without being seen. This fox was full of magic, so when it asked the sky for darkness, it became night. Just then, a raven was flying by, and it needed light to find food and things to play with. The dark sky was not good for the raven, so it asked for light. Then the sky brightened, and it became day.

Because these two animals could never agree, we now have day and night.





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Way back then, there were no caribou on the land. People hunted only small animals, and almost everything could be eaten, even dirt and rocks. The caribou we now depend on lived underground, safely away from hunters.

But one day, a land spirit who wanted to provide for his wife cut a hole into the earth and let the caribou out. At first he only let out one or two caribou, but the hole was accidentally left open and many, many caribou escaped.

And now, because of this land spirit's action, the North is filled with caribou.

Way back then, animals could remove their fur or feathers like we remove clothing. When they took off their animal skins, they would appear human underneath. In an old story, a man found a snow goose swimming in a small lake. Without her feathers, she was a beautiful woman, so he asked this goose-woman to be his wife. She was with the man for several years.

In time, the goose began to miss flying. So one day, in secret, she made a new jacket of feathers. When she put on this feather jacket, she became a goose once again and flew away.



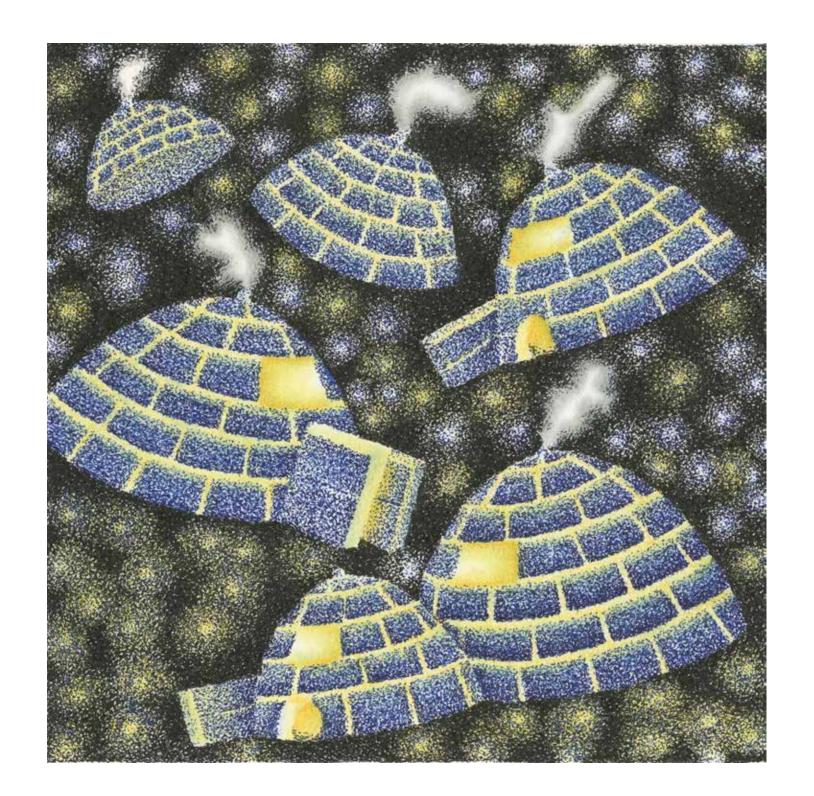


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Way back then, there were very few Inuit in the North. So the land started to give birth to children to help Inuit grow in number. These babies were found and adopted by people travelling across the tundra. When these babies grew to be adults, they looked the same as you and I, but they were children of the land.

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Way back then, there was much magic in the world. Words, objects, and even houses were magical. People did not need to travel by dog team. They would just tell their *igluit* where they wanted to be, and in the night, while everyone slept, their houses would fly to the places they were asked to go. Can you imagine looking at the night sky and seeing igluit travelling from place to place?





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Way back then, the sea was almost empty. There were no seal, no belugas, no narwhals, not even walruses could be found. Even fish didn't exist in the earliest days. Can you imagine that?

There was once a beautiful girl who refused to take a husband. However, one day she was tricked into marrying a bird spirit. This spirit took the woman far away from her home before revealing himself, and his cruel nature. From this woman's fingers were born many of the sea mammals we know today, such as ringed seal, bearded seal, and belugas.

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"That is what the world was like way back then," said Kudlu. "Now close your eyes, and go to sleep."

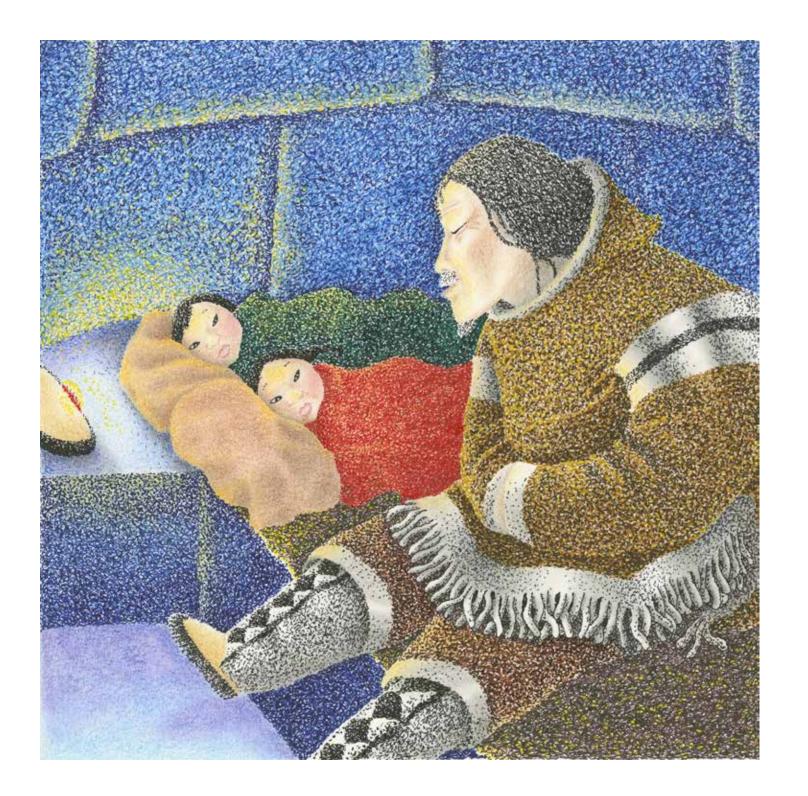
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"We cannot sleep yet! Tell us more, Ataata," Nyla replied.

Makpa yawned and added, "Yes, there must be more to tell."

"Shhhhh," Kudlu hushed his children. "I will tell you a bit more. Lay your heads on your pillows. Close your eyes and try to imagine what I am telling you."





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Way back then, there were people who lived in the North before Inuit arrived. These people were called the *Tuniit*. They were thick and strong, and they taught Inuit many things. It is even said that the Tuniit were so strong that a single hunter could carry a walrus on his back without help.

Can you imagine how strong the Tuniit must have been to do such a thing?

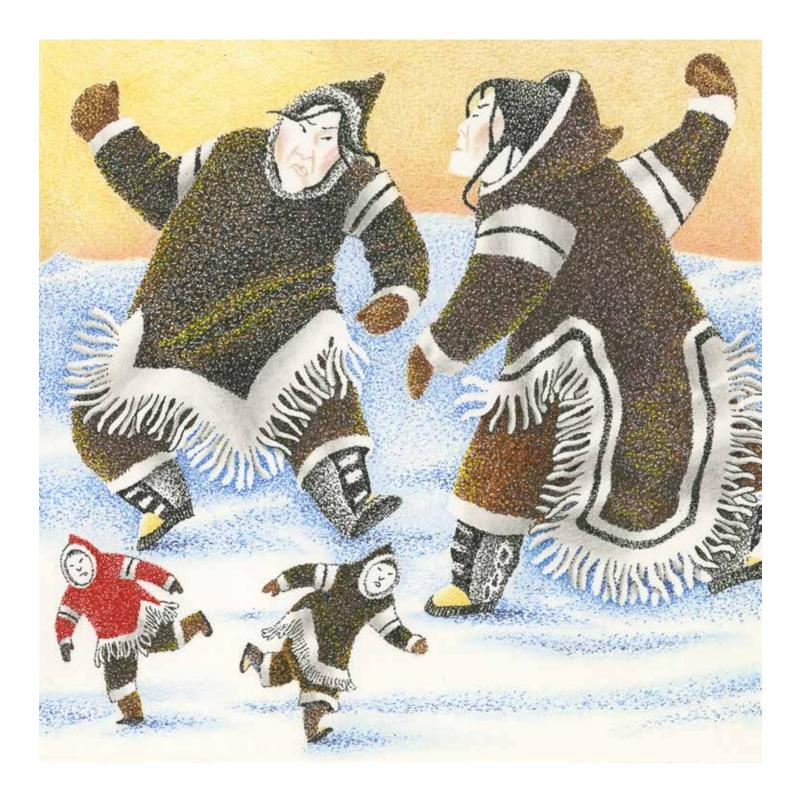
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Way back then, many giant animals lived in the North. The most feared was the *nanurluk*, the giant polar bear. Way back then, kayakers had to be watchful of these giant bears when they paddled far from land.

These bears were so big that they could be mistaken for icebergs when they floated lazily in the sea. Can you imagine a bear as large as an iceberg?





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Way back then, there were giants in the world. These huge men and women would step over rivers, and wade far into the sea to hunt for whales. These giants were usually not friendly toward each other, and would fight amongst themselves often.

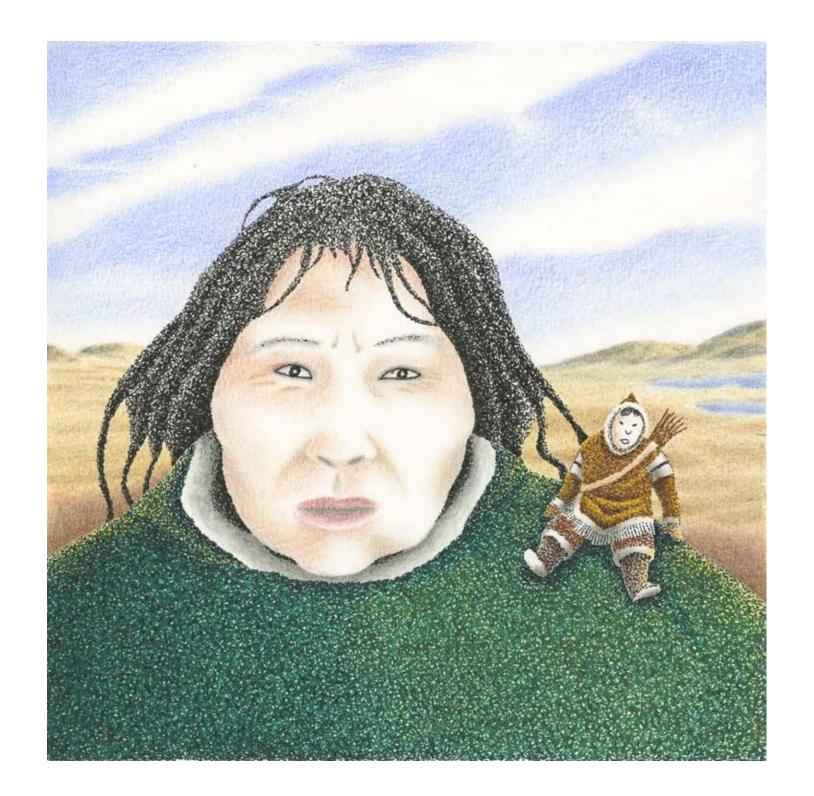
What do you think it sounded like when two giants fought? I imagine it must have sounded like a thunderstorm when the giants came together. And the land must have shaken as if there were an earthquake.

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Way back then, there lived one huge giant who was friendly to Inuit. This giant adopted an Inuit hunter as his son. Together they travelled across the Arctic looking for adventure and animals to hunt.

Can you imagine what it must have been like for the little hunter to sit on his giant father's shoulder and look out onto the world?





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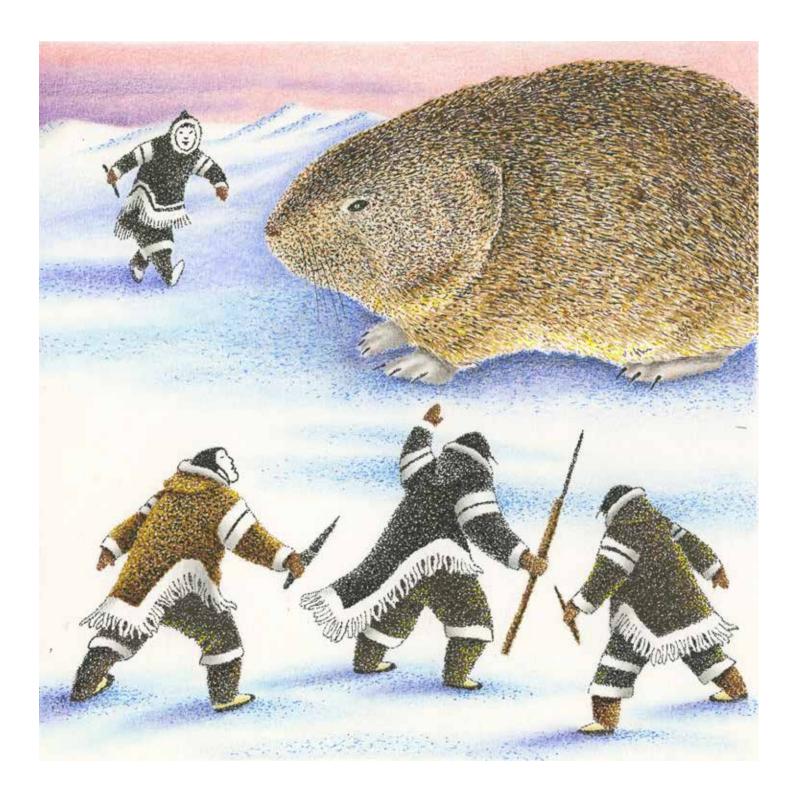
Way back then, there was even a baby giant named Narsuk. Narsuk was an orphan. He had lost his parents long ago, and he was left crying on the tundra. But the land took pity on Narsuk and gave him the sky as his home. It is said that this baby giant is so strong that he can knock down a mountain with a kick!

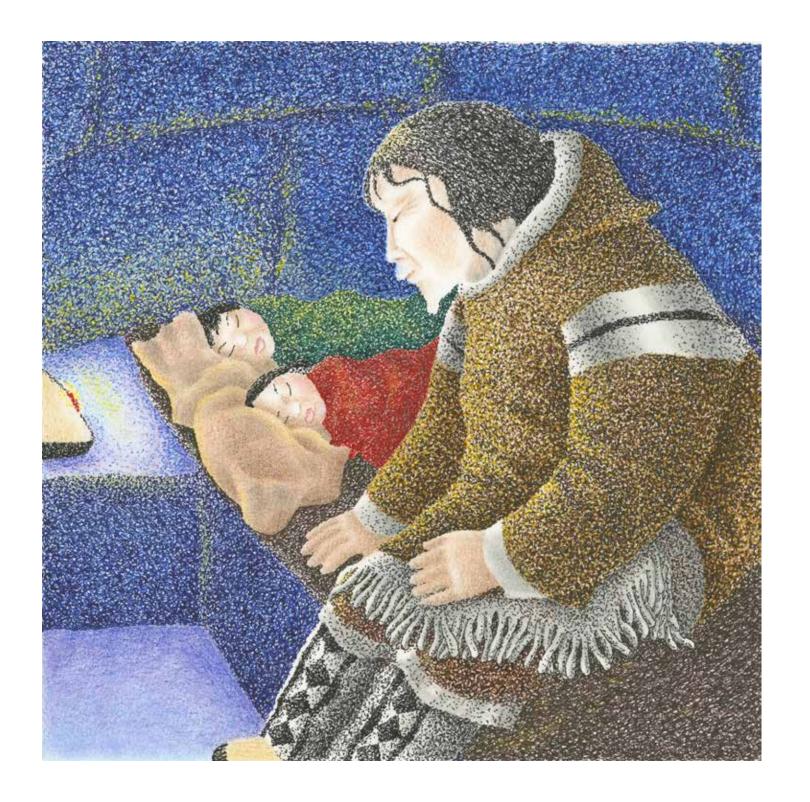
Now Narsuk lives above the clouds. And when he gets upset, as all children do, his tantrums cause storms and blizzards.

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Way back then, there were magical people who could change their size whenever they wanted. And, even though they could be any size, they usually chose to stay small. For these little hunters, hunting a lemming was as dangerous as hunting a polar bear.

It is said that these little people still live in the North, but they try to avoid humans as much as they can. Can you imagine hunters so small that they could fit in the palm of your hand?





Kudlu looked at his children. Their eyes were closed and they were breathing softly.

"My kuluit, I am glad you are asleep," whispered Kudlu. "I didn't have much more to tell you. You see, when I was a child, I always fell asleep before my grandparents got to the end of each story, and I never heard the endings."

Smiling to himself, Kudlu made sure his children were well covered with their blankets. He dimmed the qulliq's flame, and all was quiet in the world, except for the soft whistle of the wind outside.

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Germaine Arnaktauyok is an Inuit artist and illustrator, best known for her prints and etchings depicting Inuit myths and traditional ways of life. In 1999, she designed the special-edition two-dollar coin commemorating the founding of the territory of Nunavut. She is the co-author, with Gyu Oh, of *My Name is Arnaktauyok: The Life and Art of Germaine Arnaktauyok*. She lives in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

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Neil Christopher is an educator, author, and filmmaker. He first moved to the North many years ago to help start a high school program in Resolute Bay, Nunavut. It was those students who first introduced Neil to the mythical inhabitants from Inuit traditional stories. The time he spent in Resolute Bay changed the course of Neil's life. Since that first experience in the Arctic, Nunavut has been the only place he has been able to call home. For the last twenty years, Neil has worked with many community members to record and preserve traditional Inuit stories. Together with his colleague Louise Flaherty and his brother Danny Christopher, Neil started a small publishing company in Nunavut called Inhabit Media Inc., and has since been working to promote northern stories and authors.

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