

INGA RAVNA EIRA

Poems in Sami, Norwegian and English

Norwegian translations by Inga Ravna Eira and Kari Wattne

of the fifty thousand or so who define themselves as Sami (formerly known as Lapp) in Norway. Traditionally their life is one of seasonal migration in close-knit groups of reindeer herders. The Sami language, which has several markedly different dialects, belongs to the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic family of languages. Assimilation policies, however, for many years the use of the indigenous language was widely prohibited, and teachers for the number of children they made to stop speaking Sami. Nonetheless there remains a tradition of oral literature in Sami, adapted to written form since the mid-nineteenth century. Poetry—yoik being the Sami form of musical expression—has served for centuries as a means of identity, and literary and musical forms have long been used to articulate resistance to colonisation. Since the 1970s Sami literature has undergone a revival, though it is not yet secure. There are still many Sami who have never been educated in their own language.

At Home

Ruovttus son lea
Ristin Gutnel
áhkuid gáibmi
Risten áhkku gii lei ceahppi
Gutnel áhkku fas šiega
ja goappaóagat čabbát

Skuvllas son lea
Kirsten Gunhilde
su albma namma
maid báhppa bijai ja
maid oahpaheadđji ge

máhtta dadjat

Man rikkis son lea
geas leat guokte nama

Hjemme heter hun
Risten Gutnel
etter bestemødrene
Risten så flink
Gutnel så snill
og begge to vakre

På skolen heter hun
Kirsten Gunhilde
presten ga henne navnet
et ordentlig navn
som også læreren
kan uttale

Hun er heldig

That is obvious

We who have all of Sápmi
don't own the land
That is understandable

De som har en stat
eier jorda
Det er naturlig det

Vi som har hele Sápmi
eier ikke jorda
Det er

muhto sámegiella gal ii hala

Sára lohká iežas leat sábmelažžan
ja hállá sámegiela
muhto son gis
lea dažain naitalan

Álehtá maid lohká
iežas leat sápmelažžan
muhto son gis
orru boasto beal sámebáikkis

Injá maid doalla
iežas sápmelažžan
muhto gávtti
gal ii ane

Gutnil vigga maid leat
sápmelažžan
muhto son gis
ii máhte sámegiela
Su eadni lea oainnat rivgu

Gádja lohká maid iežas
leat sápmelažžan
muhto de gis
ii máhte dan
albma sámegiela

Márjá maid doalla
iežas leat sápmelažžan
muhto de gis
ii láhte nu mo
sápmeláš galggáši

Ja mun imaštalan
makkár son dat
albma sáme nissonolmoš leat

Samiske kvinner

Anne sier hun er flyttsamejente
men hun går jo på skole
og kan ikke en gang sy skaller

Biret er flyttsamekone
men hun har ikken noen sønner

Ristin er også flyttsamekone
men hun jobber jo på butikken
Og hvem skall da
sy skaller til mannen

Elle er også flyttsamekone
To voksne sønner har hun
men hun har
ingen til å hjelpe med syinga

Tone er også flyttsamekone
men hun er jo norsk
Sy kan hun
men språket kan hun slettes ikke

Sará sier at hun er same
og snakker samisk
men hun er jo gift med en nordmann

Alehtta sier også at hun er same
men hun bor jo ikke
i sameland

Ingá mener også at hun er same
men kun i 67.1(g)-150 i

me9di0.8(t)al0.8(t).7(n e)1.1((met13.9(a))TJ 0 -2.2830 TD36.0082 TTD0.0051 Már)9(r)j2.1(o)ac
men

Biret is the wife of a reindeer herder
but she does not have any sons

Ristin is the wife
of a reindeer herder too
but she works in a shop
and who will then sew her husband's
fur shoes

Elle is also the wife
of a reindeer herder
She has two grown-up sons
but who will then
help her with the sewing

Tone is the wife
of a reindeer herder too
but she is Norwegian
a skilful seamstress
but she does not speak Sami

Sara claims to be Sami
and speaks the language
but she married a Norwegian

Alehtta claims to be a Sami too
but she lives far away from Sapmi

Also Inga is of Sami origin
but she never
wears the Sami costume

Gutnil wants to be a Sami
but she does not speak the language
Her mother is Norwegian

Gadja says she is a Sami
but she does not
have the right accent

Even Maja has Sami roots
but she does not behave
as a Sami should

And I keep wondering
what can she be like
the real Sami woman

The Gods

The Gods turned the soil
hid the gold under the stones
but the strangers found it

The spirits and the underworld people fled
hid in the mountain
but were nevertheless disturbed

How dare they
challenge gods and spirits

Gudene vendte om jorda
gjemte gullet under steinene
men de fremmede fant det

Åndene og huldrene flyktet
gjemte seg i fjellene
men likevel blei de plaget

Hvordan tør de
utfordre guder og ånder

Ipmilat jorgaledje eatnama
cihke golli gedggiid vuollái
muht