

Nunayaagvinmi itut Uvlumini

A Day at Camp

Text in English by Jane Atuk
Inupiat translation by Richard Knownuk Atuk
Illustrated by Karen (Eben) Garcia

Dedicated to the memory of our grandmothers who taught us much about living in harmony with the earth and with each other.

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Summary: During a summer day at camp children learn about water safety and participate in cultural activities including gathering greens, preparing food, getting firewood and traditional Inupiat dancing. The book features information about four dance songs shared by the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage. Two of the songs (“Aluiiganiaq” and “Tipsizuklui”) are over one hundred years old, “Kizhuq” was created around 1999, and the “Float Coat Dance” was created in 2017 to help promote the use of life jackets when boating in Alaska.

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We chose to print the text of this story in both English and Inupiaq so that the story can be read in either language. The Inupiaq dialect used is that of the Northwest Seward Peninsula, specifically the dialect of the people of Wales (Kingigin), Alaska. For many centuries Inupiaq has existed as an oral language only. Young children learned by listening to stories told by their elders in Inupiaq. These stories were repeated often and memorized to be passed along from generation to generation. The traditional dances served as another way to record and celebrate events, activities, and observations about daily life. Each dance tells a story through the song and the motions.

In the 1800s and early 1900's, Inupiat children were forced to go to school and learn English. They were often severely punished for speaking Inupiaq at school. The dances were also stopped in many places, including the village of Wales. During this time the Inupiaq culture and language were threatened with extinction. Since 1990, the Kingikmiut people (and descendants from the village of Wales) have reclaimed their dances and they are now regularly practiced where Kingikmiut people gather at events large and small throughout Alaska, but particularly in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nome, and Wales. Today the Kingikmiut and people from the other coastal villages on the Seward Peninsula are working to revive and preserve their own dialects by putting their language in writing and teaching it in their schools as other Inupiat people have done.

This book can be a resource for teachers and parents who want to promote awareness and understanding of the language and culture of the Inupiat people of the Seward Peninsula. We believe that this book and others like it can help our young children to gain a sense of pride and a clearer understanding of their own heritage. The stories and illustrations in this book can serve as a springboard for discussions about the readers' and listeners' own cultural experiences.

Part One: Float Coat/ Niqsaq Puuq

ayaunalu paakalu quwii'asuqtuk.

ayaunalu paakalu anayugaatlu aulaaliuqtut nunayaagvinmun.

Ayona and Paaka are excited. They are going to camp with their family.



nunayaagvinmi ayaunam ataataga paqnaḡaa umiaḡaa. tavaḡum
aqatuuraaqtuq nunaiyagiik umiaqtinniagagvik nagaṭun.
uuviilat pukuṭwiilat.
tavaḡum aitugaak niqsaq puuq nunaiyagiknun, “uvvaa niqsaq
puuq”.

At camp Ayona’s dad gets the boat ready.
Tevuk teaches the girls about boating safety. Kids don’t float.
Tevuk hands each girl a float coat. “Here’s your float coat.”

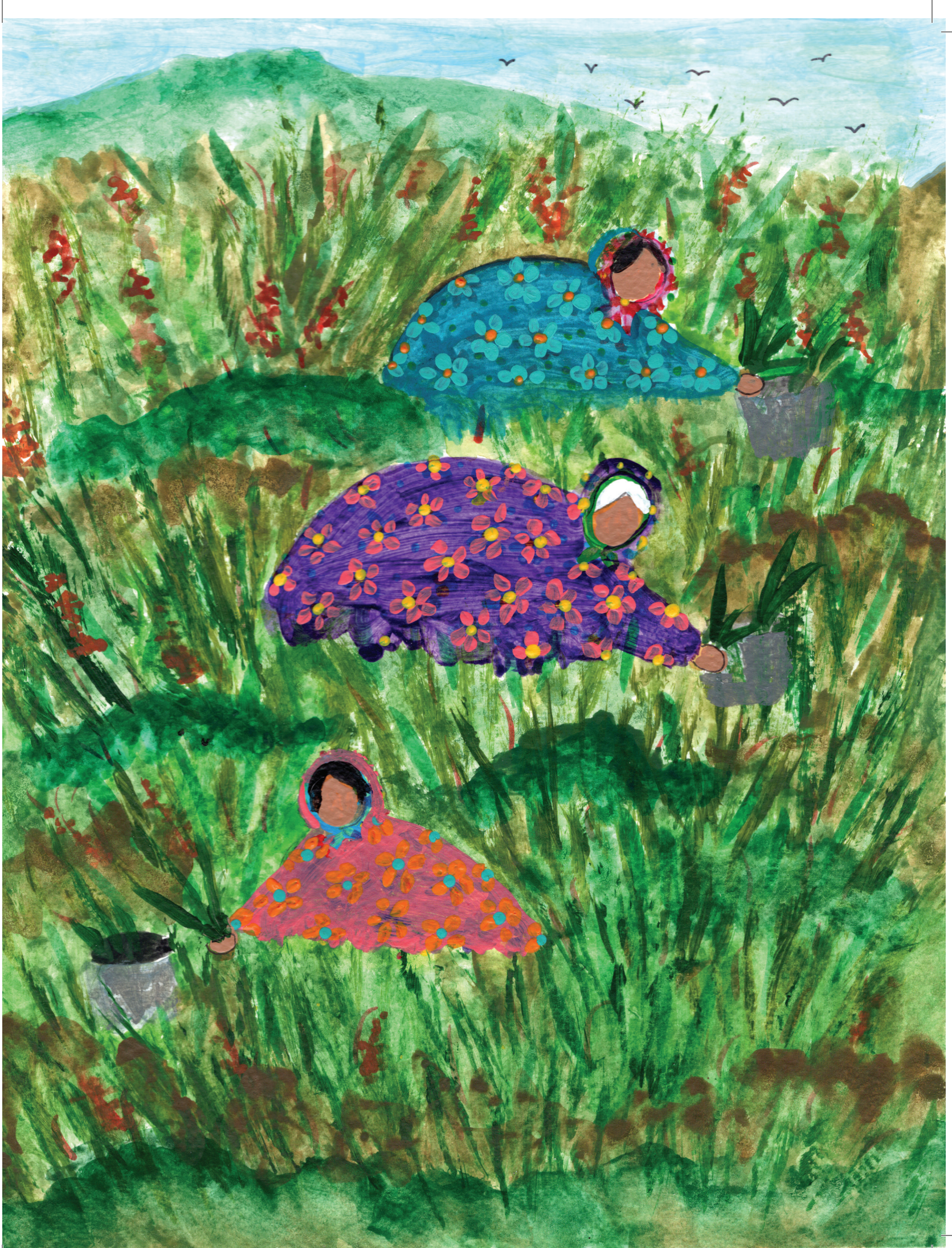
Note: A video with instructions on the “Float Coat Dance” and boating safety in Alaska is found on YouTube by searching the term “Float Coat Dance”.



Part Two: Sour Dock/Aluiiganiaq

igiplutin umiamun ataatagaklu aanagaklu niaqsaruk
aluiiganiaqtut umiaklutin.
aanagak aituutigak “aluiigaaniaq” atuun aluiigaaniaghmiq.

They go in the boat with Dad and Grandma to pick sour dock.
Grandma sings the sour dock song while they pick.



qitiquunaasiman aanagum aiqatuuraaqtuq aluiiganiuum
atuutam talamiit.
nunivak, agvii, agusi, aituuraaqtut

At lunchtime Grandma shows them the motions of the sour dock song.
picking, chopping, mixing, serving



naanaakun nunayaagvinmi ataagum igniliugaa.
aanam saiyluuqtuqlu qamamaliuqtuqlu.

Later at camp Dad builds a fire.
Grandma makes tea and qamamak.



Part Three: Wood Chopping/Kizhuq

tavaq aguiizhuq sinaamun iaqlaituq kizhuṇnik.
navzhaavalaqtuq kizhuṇnik.
kizhiuvalatuq kaḥhavaqḥuu.

Tevuk walks to the beach looking for wood.
He finds lots of wood. He chops and chops with his axe.



imaitugaa iglilaun kizhuᑎnik.
tavak piyaa, “uvvaa aaka kizhuutin”.
aakam iglaatuq. iggayugaa tavaq pualaaziuqnaamik.

He stacks the chopped wood in the pickup truck. He says, “Uvvaa Akaa, your wood.”
Grandma laughs. She helps Tevuk make a song about it.



aguiizhuaq, qiniguqtaaqtuaq, kaliktuaq, kizhiuqtuaq
quligiiksitaqtuaq

walking, looking, dragging logs, chopping, stacking



Part Four: Smiling/Tipsizuqlui

unnuaqsuman aggizhut. ataatalu tavaqlu suiayaanuk.
ayaanalu paakalu qiniṇnauraagaik agnat aggizhuat
tipsizuqlutik. aggiguqtuak atali aanatunlu ilauragaalu.

That evening they have a dance. Dad and Tevuk play their drums.
Ayona and Paaka watch the women dancing and giggle.
They want to dance like Grandma and her friend.



aanam aiqatuuraagai niaqsaaruk aggizhut aanaminlu.
iluhatinᑭ aggizhut.
quwii'asuqlutinᑭ.

Grandma teaches the girls. They learn to dance with Grandma.
Everyone dances together.
They are happy.



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