

The Silver Wave

Michelle Williams Gamaker, (2020)



Figure 1 - A still from Michelle Williams Gamakers' film *The Silver Wave*, commissioned by RAMM in 2020

Key Stage 2 Education Pack

Tiny wooden figurines from RAMM's collections inspired a film which tells the story of a woman who survived for two years, stranded on an uninhabited island north of Siberia.

Introduction

This KS2 education pack for schools has been designed to complement a new film installed at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM) by artist Michelle Williams Gamaker. The film can be viewed in the museum until 25th July 2021 and also [online](#). This pack provides background information to the film and an insight into contemporary art practice. It gives ideas for classroom activities linked to the film and to the National Curriculum. There is range of individual and group activities that can be selected as appropriate. Links to further resources are also provided at the end of the pack.

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) is a world-class museum in Exeter, Devon. The museum contains a variety of collections and thousands of objects, many of which are not on display. However, museums are not just about the past; RAMM also contains new objects and artworks which can help us to think about the past in new ways and to make links between different historical periods and events, and how we live now. RAMM has an ongoing programme of contemporary artists responding to the museum collection by making new artworks. Children are very welcome at RAMM and it is a place to explore and have fun!

Michelle Williams Gamaker is a renowned contemporary artist who works with moving image, performance, and films. She creates fictional landscapes as settings for the stories she tells through her artworks and she describes her work as ‘fictional activism’. She tells stories from the viewpoint of characters who have been forgotten or not listened to.

Contemporary art is art that is being made now, in our current time, or fairly recently. Contemporary artists work with all sorts of materials: some use traditional materials such as paint, textiles and clay, some work with performance, film or make works outdoors in the environment, and some use digital technologies. An artist may work in several different forms. Contemporary art is sometimes collaborative, meaning the artist doesn’t work alone but works jointly with other artists or with people with different skills. The art is often about the ideas and meaning the artist wants to convey, as well as what the artwork looks like and how it is made.

The Silver Wave

This 12 minute film by the critically acclaimed artist Michelle Williams Gamaker was commissioned by RAMM in 2020 and will be displayed in the World Cultures gallery until 25th July 2021. It is inspired by objects from the World Cultures collection and by the incredible story of Ada Blackjack, an Iñupiat woman and the only surviving member of an expedition to Wrangel Island in the Arctic in 1921. Ada was employed as a seamstress and cook for four explorers, who hoped to claim the island for the British Empire. However, the four men fell ill and eventually died or disappeared while attempting to seek help, leaving Ada to survive alone on the island for three long months.

The words you hear in the film are unedited extracts from Ada's diary, expressing her concern for her young son Bennett, who she reluctantly left behind in a care home. Ada's words are narrated by Iñupiat poet and writer Carrie Ayagaduk Ojanen, from the Ugiuvamiut tribe of King Island. Ada was taught English by the Christian missionaries who raised her. Like many Indigenous people at that time, she was relocated and suffered the suppression of her native language along with an inadequate education. Ada may not have had a strong command of any language. Carrie Ayagaduk Ojanen asks that, 'the listener hears the context of the broken language in the broken world'. Ada's was a world of cultural upheaval and colonial violence that Indigenous peoples were forced into.

In the film, Michelle Williams Gamaker projects archival images and lighting effects over the objects to evoke the Arctic. *The Silver Wave* film also includes Mexican rain gods, Thai dancer figurines and Indian tourist souvenirs, objects that are currently kept in the museum's stores.

Making the film

Michelle Williams Gamaker tells stories to enable us to see history from a different viewpoint. She particularly wants us to hear the voices of people who were not in positions of power and whose stories have not been heard or remembered. Historical events, such as the Wrangel Island expedition, have generally been told from the viewpoint of more powerful people of the time, such as white, male explorers. The experiences of someone like Ada -a native woman - would, historically, have been

overlooked. Fortunately, Ada wrote a diary which has survived, and this gives us another way of seeing things.



Figure 2 - Ada and the Silver Wave explorers. Image credit: Michelle Williams Gamaker

Michelle Williams Gamaker was invited to make a piece of art for RAMM based on works that inspired her from the museum's vast collections. She was drawn to some of the small figures in the World Cultures collection. Not all of these objects are on display in the museum: some are held in the museum stores. Michelle discovered the story of Ada Blackjack, her diary and the history of the Wrangel Island expedition through online research and she created the film using objects from RAMM, extracts from Ada's diaries, and her own imagination.

“Ada’s story is one of survival at all costs. Accompanying the explorers to Wrangel Island went against her better judgement, but she needed money to care for her son Bennett. It is clear from later interviews that the events on the island were very traumatic to her. Working with artefacts from RAMM’s collection I take them on a journey to tell Ada’s untold story. By using projected archival images, RAMM’s objects, and lighting the museum to evoke the Arctic, a scene unfolds that is quite fantastical, reflecting Ada’s emotions while on the island”.

While the objects used in the film are mainly from the Arctic region, Michelle also wanted to give a sense that history and stories overlap across cultures and time.

“I saw one of the objects in the storeroom of the World Cultures collection – a native North American knife made from a bear jaw and steel. The steel has a Sheffield hallmark, and I was inspired by this mixing and movement of cultures. I thought it would be amazing if objects from across the museum’s cabinets somehow seeped into Ada’s subconscious and appeared in her dreams. They act as witnesses to Ada in her isolation. I like the idea that figures from other collections can be part of her story, travelling across time and space.”

Michelle made the film by working with other people to turn her creativity, ideas and vision into the finished product; teamwork is often essential to creating powerful and moving artworks.



Questions for the class

- Who else might be involved in making the film?
- Can they think of other activities where **teamwork** is needed?

Some of the other people who were involved in supporting Michelle in her filmmaking were the curators and conservators at the museum. A curator is a person who has specialist knowledge about a particular area of a museum’s collection and is involved in creating interpretation material to help people understand more about these objects. A conservator is someone who is responsible for the repair and preservation of museum objects. Other people involved in making Michelle’s film were: the camera person and special effects expert, musicians, the Iñupiat poet who spoke Ada’s words, the librarians and archivists in Alaska, USA, who provided information, copies of Ada’s diaries, and old newspaper accounts of the expedition.

Activities and Themes

For ease of planning, themes and activities are listed under the curriculum areas PSHE, Geography, Technology, Art, and English, but the activities are generally cross-curricular. For example, an art activity can also involve thinking about feelings (PSHE) and using geographical knowledge. Teachers can select, adapt, emphasize or extend the aspects most appropriate for their class. Activities are a mix of short, long, individual and group activities. Group activities are designed to encourage the children to work together, as one of the consequences of the pandemic is that many children have missed out on opportunities to play and learn in groups with other children.

Links to **further resources** are provided at the end of this pack.

GEOGRAPHY

The Arctic Region



Figure 3 - A map showing the Arctic region and Wrangel Island. Image credit: Wikipedia

Wrangel Island is in the Arctic region. It is a part of Russia and is now a protected nature reserve. Find the Arctic zone on a globe or map. Scientists usually define the Arctic as the area above the 'Arctic Circle'. This is an imaginary line that circles the top of the globe. The Arctic consists of the Arctic Ocean and parts of Canada, Russia, the USA, Greenland, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Iceland.

The expedition in 1921 was trying to claim the island for the British Empire. This would not be an acceptable thing to do today. The expedition ship, the *Silver Wave*, set out from Nome in Alaska to sail to Wrangel Island.



Figure 4 - Cape Waring, Wrangel Island. Image credit: Legion Media (www.rbth.com)



Questions for the class

- Can you find Wrangel Island on a map or globe?
- What sort of climate does the film seem to portray?

- How does it do this? What are the ways the film conveys a sense of the weather and the light?
- What are the sounds and colours of the film? Did you notice any wind sounds or the fur trim on the parka hood moving as if blown?

The Arctic climate is very harsh because it is so far north and temperatures on Wrangel Island remain below freezing for about eight months a year with lots of mist and fog, as well as snow in the winter. Wrangel Island is also particularly windy! Summers are short in the Arctic and the winters long.

The earth's tilt causes extreme cold and darkness in the Arctic winter but has the opposite effect in summer so there is more light and warmth. At midwinter it stays dark all day and the sun stays below the horizon, but in midsummer there are 24 hours of daylight and the sun doesn't set. A globe is very helpful in demonstrating this.

The Arctic environment consists of tundra and taiga, as well as sea, snow and ice. There are flat areas and mountainous parts.



Questions for the class

- What do the following words mean: tundra, taiga, permafrost, ice cap, and glacier?
- What does the Greek word *arktos* mean? Why has the Arctic been given its name from this word?

Animals found on Wrangel Island include polar bears, arctic fox, reindeer, walrus, snow geese and thousands of migrating birds. It is the last known place on earth that the woolly mammoth lived, about 4000 years ago. There are a surprising number of plants that have adapted to grow on Wrangel Island - there at least 400 different species of plant!

About 4 million people live in the Arctic region including different groups of indigenous people, generally known as Inuit, although many non-native people also live there now. Ada was an Iñupiat and the Iñupiat people still live in the north of Alaska, USA.

Climate change and the Anthropocene

Scientists have identified that human behaviour is causing global temperatures to rise and the earth's climate to change. We are now living in the geological period described as the Anthropocene. This is very apparent at the earth's poles which show the effects of this human behaviour most starkly and are acting as an early warning system.

The ice of the Arctic contains around ten percent of the world's fresh water and when frozen this acts as a giant reservoir which reflects sunlight and helps to keep the region cool and the global climate stable. As temperatures rise, the ice starts to melt. Iñupiat and other Arctic people are worried that climate change is dramatically altering the environment and affecting their traditional way of life. Thawing ice can make travel in the Arctic difficult, cause floods and erosion and affect traditional hunting. Arctic animals such as polar bears and walrus also have to change their behaviours to adapt to the changing environment. Many indigenous people of the Arctic argue that climate change represents a threat to their human rights.



Questions for the class

- Are there things we can do to avoid or slow down climate change?
- Should we be concerned about other people (and animals) in the world who live far away from us?
- Is there something we could do in school that would make a difference?

Maps

Show the children some maps and explain what some of the symbols mean, how features such as landmasses, rivers and oceans are depicted and how a map is aligned with points of the compass. Ask them to draw and colour a map (or colour and annotate an outline) showing where the Arctic region is and label Wrangel Island. Label North, South, East and West. Write some facts about the Arctic and some sentences about whether they would or would not like to visit it and explain why!

Maps can be very beautiful and decorative as well as functional and there are quite a lot of artists who work with maps. Maps are often folded so that they can be carried around easily, but they can be a challenge to fold up again once they have been opened! One very simple folding method using A4 paper is to fold into 3 concertina sections lengthwise, then fold this long rectangle into another 3 concertina sections to achieve a neat result. There is also a more complex fold called a Turkish fold, starting with square paper, more suitable for older children (for details please see the resources section at the end of this document).

Map Activity

- Using your knowledge of how maps use symbols, lines and colours to tell us about a place, make a map of somewhere you know well - this could be your local area at home, town or countryside, your street, your journey to school or school itself.
- How can you make this map look visually interesting as well as providing necessary information?
- Fold your map as instructed so that you can carry it easily.

Group activity

Expedition!

Put the children into groups of 4-6 with the following aims:

- Imagine you are a team of explorers going to the Arctic.
- Where are you going?
- Why are you travelling there? What is the purpose of your expedition?

It could be scientific to gather data or measure things, creative to make art, film or writing in response to a place, cultural to meet and talk to the people who live there, archaeological to look at evidence of past human lives, or for natural history to observe and protect wildlife, plants and animals. Or it could be for pure adventure and challenge in unknown environment! You could give each group a different purpose for their expedition or let them choose.

- Decide on a name for your expedition-team and then decide what roles will be needed in the team, for example, cook, navigator, mechanic, first aider, photographer etc, and who would take on each one.
- What equipment do you think you will need? The *Silver Wave* expedition took a team of dogs and a sled aboard the boat as well as a cat!
- How much food should you take?

Ask each group to make an 'expedition logbook' containing all this information – purpose, roles, who's who, tasks, equipment, an imaginary map (or an actual map of Wrangle Island) – with a cover and the expedition name. This could be as simple as handwritten A4 or A5 sheets bound or stapled together with a card cover, done as a more creative book-making activity or as an ICT activity.



Group activity

Shelter building challenge!

Provide a selection of materials such as ropes, cardboard boxes, blankets, PE equipment, whatever you can find - children are very creative! This can be done outdoors or in a larger indoor space. Put the children into teams of 4-6.

- Imagine you have arrived on an island, darkness is falling, a storm is brewing and you need a safe place to spend the night. Build a shelter that all your team can fit in together.
- Set a time limit for this activity, remind them they are working as a team and everyone needs to be involved. Photograph each shelter.
- Was it an easy task or quite difficult?
- Did you discuss your ideas first and make a plan together? Or did you start building and work it out as you went along?
- Did everyone take part equally or did some people take the lead and others follow? Was there any conflict within the team?

Use the photographs to make either group posters or a whole class display about successful teamwork.

PSHE

Isolation

Ada Blackjack managed to survive on Wrangel Island for two years in extremely harsh conditions. For the first year she was accompanied by four male explorers but when food became scarce three of the explorers left on foot towards Siberia to find help. They were never seen again. Ada was left to care for the fourth man who was very ill. After six months this man died and Ada was left entirely alone on the island for three long months. She must have missed her son Bennett very much.



Figure 5 - Ada Blackjack 1920.
Image credit Wikipedia



Questions for the class

- How does the film get across the sense of being alone in a wild landscape?
- Do you think writing a diary might have helped Ada not to feel so alone?

Group Discussion about Isolation

This could be done as a class circle time activity or in smaller adult-led groups, it can be linked into the children's experiences during the pandemic. Be sensitive to the children's various experiences, as some may have had a very difficult time. For some children it may be easier to talk about the film and Ada's experiences than to directly share their own experiences or feelings. Of course, some children may have had positive experiences during the pandemic, for example, enjoying extra time with family or spending more time outside.



Questions for the class

- What does the film tell us about how Ada felt on the island?
- How do you imagine she felt when she finally made it home to her son?
- How did you feel during the pandemic?
- Have there been any times in life when you have felt lonely?
- What sort of things can help us when we feel lonely?

We don't necessarily always feel lonely when we are on our own, sometimes it feels good to have time to ourselves. Sometimes people can feel lonely even when they are with other people, perhaps if they don't get on very well or they feel different or uncomfortable or just shy.

- How do you think Ada felt when she was with the explorers, before they disappeared or died?

Ada did not speak English as her first language, as they did, and because she was a native Iñupiat woman we cannot be sure how well they would have treated her, although she was an essential member of the expedition and ultimately the only one to survive. Ada had an expedition cat for company and she wrote a diary. Some people find that being in nature or remembering people that they love or a thinking about a happy place helps them to cope when they feel lonely. Reading a book, listening to music, or doing some exercise is also helpful for some people.

- How can we help somebody else who is feeling lonely or upset? How can we be kind?

Make a class list or poster to display of the children's ideas of how to be kind and inclusive. If you use a class marble jar or similar, have a special focus one week on noticing and rewarding kindness, maybe praise the kind acts but keep it anonymous: "I noticed someone who.....". Plenty of class kindness can lead to a reward for everyone such a game, or choosing time, etc.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Cold weather clothes

Ada was a seamstress which was one of the reasons she was employed on the exhibition.



Questions for the class

- Does this tell us something about how important it is to have good clothes in the Arctic?
- What would happen in a very cold and remote climate if you got holes in your clothes or if the seams came undone?
- Do you think everyone should learn to mend or make their own clothes?
- What are the important qualities of clothes for life in the Arctic?

Clothing design often includes elements that are for decoration not just function. Look at some traditional Arctic Parkas (please see resources section) and how they are made and decorated. What materials were available 100 years ago in the Arctic? Materials were natural rather than synthetic 100 years ago, and because of the harsh Arctic climate animal products were more readily available than plant ones. Animal fur, skin and gut were all used to make clothes and were very effective materials. Do we still use these in the UK? What other sort of materials are available to us?

Show the children some plant-based textiles, such as cotton, wool and linen, and synthetic textiles, such as polyester and nylon. Ask them if they know what silk is made from? Silkworm caterpillars spin this and silk is a surprisingly warm material, still popular with people who go on outdoor adventures in cold places – it makes very warm underwear, especially long-johns and vests! People who live in the Arctic today use both modern and traditional materials to make their clothes.

Let the children feel and examine a selection of materials and threads. Try to provide a range of fabrics, natural and synthetic, thin, thick, smooth, rough, plain, patterned, waterproof, fur-fabric, fleece, knitted, etc. Can the children sort them into natural and synthetic?



Design Activity

Design something to wear in a cold climate.

- Thinking of materials, the function and the decoration, design a garment (a parka, dungarees or a hat) for very cold weather.
- Will you choose natural or synthetic materials? Or a mix?
- Draw and annotate these designs, clearly explaining the choices of fabric and design features.
- Make sure there is a strong decorative design unique to you! What does it say about your identity?

Sewing Activity

Some children may already know how to sew, but some may not. Demonstrate threading a needle and how to do a running stitch or a blanket stitch to join two pieces of fabric together. Felt is easy to use, especially for younger children, but other fabrics could be used.

- Imagine how important Ada's diary was to her. Make a bag in which you could keep a diary safe.



Figure 6 - Example of a simple blanket stitch purse created by Christine Johns.

This can be a simple rectangle, with sides sewn up with either running stitch or blanket stitch, and a fold over flap that can be closed with either a button and loop, or with Velcro spots. A tape or ribbon can be added as a strap, or two loops to attach it to a belt. The bags can be decorated with extra stitching or by adding sequins, ribbons or patches, with glue. Encourage the children to take care with the decoration and design and to try to make it unique to them.

CREATIVE ARTS

How does the film convey the *feel* of the Arctic? How does it give us a sense of how Ada felt? Art gives us more than just the facts and how things look. It can make us see and think differently and it sometimes makes us feel things that we can't always explain with words.

Michelle Williams Gamaker used objects from more than one culture, but brought them together in the film, demonstrating that ideas and stories from different cultures can overlap and relate to one another. These can sometimes be in unexpected ways or make us see new connections. People's experiences in different cultures and historical periods also overlap. Michelle uses her imagination to link different cultures into Ada's dream world.

Art Activity

Dream Figure

Ask the children to shut their eyes and imagine a helpful animal, person or magical being that might visit them in a dream. This could be done with music playing or spoken prompts to encourage them to take time and use their imaginations.

Give each child a piece of modelling material. This could range from plasticine, playdough, salt-dough or anything similar to pottery clay, depending on what is available. Self-hardening clay such as Newclay is ideal and will be assumed as the medium. Use playdough for a shorter activity with no drying time.

Show the children how to shape and join pieces. Keep the figure small (easily held in one hand) and simple and then add on extra details. The children will discover the limits and abilities of the clay. Newclay can start to dry out with overworking but can be softened again with water.

- Paint the figures when the clay is dry
- When the first layer of paint is dry, features and small details can be added with pen or a fine brush, sequins or ribbons can be glued on. Encourage the children to be creative and imaginative in their finishing of the figures.
- Figures can also be coated with diluted PVA which will act as a layer of varnish, but this is optional.
- Write a label for each figure and what 'gift' it brings to them in the dream. Arrange the figures carefully in a display.



Figure 7 - The 'Academic Octopus' and the 'Magic Duck' created by Christine Johns as examples of possible dream figures.

Encourage the children to handle the clay figures with care, as in the film.

Do you think the way we see the objects in the film being handled so carefully, by a conservator with white gloves, helps to create the same sense of care and attention to Ada's story?

We don't all need to wear white gloves like the curators in the film, but we can all take care of our own creations, those of other people and in the same way we can take care of the stories people share with us.

Art Activity

Figure in an Arctic Landscape

The figure in a landscape a common theme in art. Ask the children to paint or collage an imagined arctic scene, focusing on a sense of scale.

- What proportion of the scene will be land or water or sky?
- What colours and textures can be used to convey the sense of the Arctic environment?
- Is it summer or winter? Light, dark or twilight?
- Are there any birds or animals visible? Would these look large or small in the environment?
- When the picture is finished, draw or paint a small figure and carefully cut it out. Try putting the figure in different places on the landscape to create the sense of being small and isolated in a big landscape. Glue the figure on when you have chosen a spot you are happy with.



Figure 8 - Example of a figure in the landscape collage created by Christine Johns

This activity can be done individually or in small groups. The whole class could work on a big picture for display.

Group activity

Make a film or PowerPoint

Provide a selection of objects and small figures for the children to choose from. Or ask them to bring a small figure or toy in from home.

- Work in small groups to create a story using these figures and draw a story board with about 6 frames.
- Make a backdrop or environment, or use a sand tray, and photograph or film the objects to capture the story.
- Use the photographs to make a PowerPoint presentation, or join and edit the film clips to make a sequence.
- Write a script or story which can be recorded and layered over the film or PP, or it could be narrated by the children while showing the PP.
- Maybe add music.
- Don't show the slides or film stills too quickly, think about the pace!



Figure 9 - Examples of 'environments' that could be used for film sequences created by Christine Johns

Be as creative as possible within the limitations of digital and technical abilities and the skills and software available. Smartphones can produce great films but may not be available in school. Remember that simple can be just as effective. Six PowerPoint slides shown for 10 seconds each could be a very atmospheric minute! Refer back to *The Silver Wave* film for inspiration.

ENGLISH

Diary writing

Talk about Ada's diaries and the sort of language she used - remember the only words you hear in the film are from Ada's diary. Ada wrote some things with a pencil and paper but also used a typewriter that the explorers had taken to Wrangel Island.

Ada's first language was Iñupiat, not English, but she was brought up by missionaries and not allowed to speak or write in her own language. 'Language suppression' by governments and officials is now considered to be wrong. However, many people today grow up speaking more than one language, and many children and students in schools in the UK are learning and writing in English (or Welsh or Gaelic) but speak a different language at home. Is that difficult? Or is it a great opportunity to understand and speak more than just one language?

Writing Activity

- A diary can be used in advance to remind you of things that are going to happen, for example, an appointment or a birthday, but also, like Ada's diary, as a record of what has happened.
- Diaries are set out by dates so they leave a record of *when* things happened as well as *what*.
- They can also be about *feelings* as well as *facts*.
- Discuss the sort of language used in a diary, the ways of recording and how frequently a diary might be written, for example, daily, weekly or only when something of note happens.
- Some people write a diary to leave a record for other people and some people write one to help them understand their own feelings. Do any of the children keep a diary?

If the school has an old-fashioned typewriter available show the children how it works and let the children try typing on it! It was thought to be important enough to take to the Arctic on the expedition. How has communication changed 100 years later? What if there is no internet or mobile signal?

Show the children how to set out a diary entry and ask them to write an **imaginary diary** using the following prompts:

- Imagine yourself stranded on an island. Are you alone?
- Do you have a companion? A pet? Who do you miss?
- Does anything exciting or scary or wonderful happen? Or maybe it is very dull...?
- How do look after yourself and get food? How do you pass the time?
- Do you eventually get home or not?

Poetry Activity

Read the Inuit poems in the resources section to the children and also show them how they are set out on the page.

- Talk about the language used in poetry, is it different to prose?
- What can a poem do differently to prose?
- How does a poet use their authentic (own) voice in poetry?
- How do these poems make the children feel?
- Do the words make imaginary pictures in our heads? Why do you think that Seagull is set out on the page in the way it is?

Write a poem about an environment that you know.

Think of a place you know that has made a strong impression on you, maybe this is somewhere close to home or somewhere you have visited. Share words that describe this environment and your feelings about this place.

- What do you want to convey in your poem? Facts, feelings, a sense of place?
- Poems don't always need to make conventional sense. You don't have to explain everything, try surprising the reader and maybe yourself!
- Remember some poems rhyme in varying patterns but some don't rhyme at all. Repetition can create rhythm and emphasis and help to build your 'word-picture'.
- Play with the layout of the text to enhance the meaning of the poem. Using a computer, tablet or ipad to set out the text can extend this activity and allow experiments with layouts and fonts.

If you want to provide more structure ask the children to use the **Acrostic form**: choose an appropriate word, write it vertically on the page and then start each new line with the next letter of the word.

This education pack was researched and written by Christine Johns as part of a contemporary art placement at RAMM organised in conjunction with her BA (Hons) Fine Art and Art History with the University of Plymouth.

Resources (Three Inuit Poems)

Tiimiaoq, something carried,

—for Joan Naviyuk Kane

in a book
we read about these things
in a book
carved figures
aṅun, aḡnaq, migiqliq

each word I know
as a dictionary
entry
take this away
and give paper
in return

my tongue against the ink
is English
naluagmiut
sucking in the flimsy fibers
spewing out a stumbling word
I teach them to Sinaguk and Paniataaq
all wrong
they round the words in their
small mouths small rivers, small stones
don't pity me, they are heavy stones
but they are the small rivers
I drop the stones into

*Classrooms stand between us, Aakaṅ but their language
classes taught me how to learn from books.*

*The years I spent away at college bring me back, Aakaṅ.
This is how to learn a foreign tongue from books.*

still, from a leather pouch small figures
tumble out—aṅun—perhaps aaṅauraq or iṅmi—his hood around his shoulders
aḡnak—perhaps nuliaq—how tenderly her brown atigi is distinguished

atausiq qituḡnaklu atausiq paniklu
one and one
tiimiasq in a small pouch, in a pocket or aḡḡinaq,
like portraits on my phone
in case of long separation
the ice floe shakes loose and tumbles him south

a village, elsewhere, all winter
they are remembered
just so, tenderly, the small figures,
placeholders, bringing to mind his beloved.
even now the residual tenderness
travels across the sterile page
the image of the images
of the beloved
love refracted through the making cannot be contained
in the dry clinical photo, even now,
the beloved tug patiently across the distant page
at the thread strung between their hearts
even the collection
the price of the sale
of the figures
their storage in a catalogued archive (or disposal)
cannot undo the stringing of that tenderness and memory
it strums a note familiar, but unique,
one reaching toward four
the hands that carved them to remember
and distance that memory traveled
and tugged at his heart, remain.

just so, I carry this memory with me,
of Ugiuvak, of four women and a man climbing
a steep ice cliff

and a small gathering of poets
each of us making, just so, our small figures
to be carried
what we are making cannot be undone

By Carrie Ayagaduk Ojanen, *Roughly for the North*, University of Alaska Press, 2018.

Moved

*The great sea stirs me.
The great sea sets me adrift,
it sways me like the weed
on a river-stone.*

*The sky's height stirs me.
The strong wind blows through my mind.
it carries me with it,
so I shake with joy.*

by Uvavnuk (an Iglukik Inuit woman) translated by Tom Lowenstein

From *Beneath the Wide Heaven: Poetry of the Environment from Antiquity to the Present.*

Seagull

SEAGULL

*who flaps his wings
over my head*

in the blue air

*You GULL up there
dive down*

come here

take me with you

in the air!

Wings flash by

In my mind's eye

and I'm up there sailing

in the cool air

a-a-a-a-a-ah

in the air.

Anon. Netsilik Inuit.

From *The Barefoot Book of Songs for Survival*.

Web links to further resources

RAMM, Exeter

[The Silver Wave: Michelle Williams Gamaker - Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter \(rammuseum.org.uk\)](https://rammuseum.org.uk)

Baltic Arts

A set of questions and prompts to encourage children to think about contemporary art.
[Question-kit.qxd \(baltic.art\)](#)

Michelle Williams Gamaker's website

[THE SILVER WAVE \(2020\) - MICHELLE WILLIAMS GAMAKER](#)

British Museum

There are some excellent resources and information on the British Museum website linked to their 2020 exhibition *Arctic: Culture and Climate*.

[Arctic: culture and climate | British Museum](#)

Including several pages about parkas [Parkas: a gift from the North - British Museum Blog](#)

[Object in Focus: Arctic amautis \(mothers' parkas\) - British Museum Blog](#)

[A VERY fancy parka | Curator's Corner S6 Ep 2 #CuratorsCorner - YouTube](#)

A Film (20 mins) about the geography of the Arctic with beautiful photography and plenty of geographical information.

[Exploring the Arctic for Kids: Arctic Animals and Climates for Children - FreeSchool - YouTube](#)

There are lots of teaching resources about the Arctic, Maps and Diary Writing on **Twinkl** if the school is signed up to this. Some resources are free and available even if not signed up, for example: [FREE! - Arctic Virtual Teaching Background \(teacher made\) \(twinkl.co.uk\)](#)

Turkish Map fold instructions

[Microsoft Word - Turkish Map Fold Lesson Plan.docx \(utah.edu\)](#)