

INGA RAVNA EIRA

Poems in Sami, Norwegian and English

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Editor's Note: Sami is the language of the people who inhabit the region they call Sapmi. This includes large parts of northern Scandinavia, from Norway to northwestern Russia, though the majority of the fifty thousand or so who define themselves as Sami (formerly known as Lapps or Finns) live in Norway. Traditionally their life is one of seasonal migration in close-knit groups as hunters and 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, meant that for many years the use of the indigenous language was widely prohibited, and teachers were given bonuses for the number of children they made to stop speaking Sami. Nonetheless there remains an ancient tradition of oral literature in Sami, adapted to written form since the mid-nineteenth century. Yoik poetry—yoik being the Sami form of musical expression—has served for centuries to confirm social identity, and literary and musical forms have long been used to articulate resistance against colonisation. Since the 1970s Sami literature has undergone a revival, though its position is far from secure. There are still many Sami who have never been educated in their own language.

At Home

Ruovttus son lea
Ristin Gutnel
áhkuidd 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
som har to navn

At home she is called
Risten Gutnel
after her grandmothers
Risten so clever
Gutnel so kind
and both very beautiful

At school she is called
Kirsten Gunhilde
the vicar gave her
a proper name
that even the teacher
can pronounce

Isn't she lucky
to have two names

Those Who Have A State

Those who have a state
own the land

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 jo forståelig det

Sii oamastit eatnama
geain lea ráddjejuvvon riika
Dat han lea lunddolaš

Mii eat oamas eatnama
geain lea olles Sápmi
Dat han gal lea áddemis

Sáme nissonolbmot

Ánne lohká iežas leat badjeniedan
muhto de gis vázzá skuvla
ja ii ge máhte gábmagiid goarrut

Biret lea badjeolbmo eamit
muhto sus gis eai lea bártnit

Ristin lea maid badjeolbmo eamit
muhto de gis bargá buvddas
Ja gii son su isidii goarru gápmagiid

Elle lea maid badjeolbmo eamit
Sus leat guokte olles bártni
muhto sus gis ii leat duodjeveahkki

Tone lea maid badjeolmo eamit
muhto son gis lea rivgu
Duoddju gal

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 koft har hun ikke

Gutnil vil gjerne være same
men hun snakker ikke samisk
mora hennes er jo norsk

Gádja sier at hun er same
men hun kan jo ikke
den rette dialekta

Márja sier også at hun er same
men hun oppfører seg ikke
slik sammer bør

Og jeg undrer meg på
hvordan den riktige samekvinnen er

Sami Women

Anne says she comes from
a reindeer herding family
but she attends school
and cannot even sew fur shoes

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
muhto gal apmasat gávdne dan

Hálddit ja gufihttarat báhtaredje
ciekádedje váriid sisa
muhto gal dat lihkká vourjjahalle

Mo dustet
hástalit ipmiliid ja vuoijnaid