

Sperling, Regerplatz 9, 81541 Munich, Germany
+49 89 54849747, mail@sperling-munich.com
www.sperling-munich.com

Anna Vogel

ukioq

23 June – 29 July 2023

I, who was always suspicious of nature, am suddenly addicted to it, addicted to moving in it, smelling it, feeling it, attacking it. The next day we go on a dog sled trip with Johanne, the dog sled guide, one of the few women in Greenland who hunt full time, reindeer and musk oxen, but also seals. Beforehand, I am wrapped into a sealskin jacket and pants, I wear a sealskin hood and reindeer skin gloves, only my face is exposed to the wind, and whenever I look in the direction of travel, I feel the cold, minus twenty-five degrees, bite through the fur clothing and my cheeks go numb. Johanne leads her dogs with shouts and a whip that she cracks against the ground every now and then; the dogs obey immediately.

We cruise on the frozen Watson, which has shrunk to a riverbed, and as the ice crunches and cracks around me, I imagine what it's like to paddle around in the freezing water in sealskin clothes that smell very discreetly but consistently of seal, the mountains and plains slowly pass us by, having nothing to do with what I understand the world to be and how it was taught to me. All the rules I have learned are obsolete here, I would have to relearn everything to survive in this environment, and yet it seems so friendly that I am tempted to get lost in the wilderness, to plunge forever into solitude, like Qivitoq, the mountain wanderer who violated the cycle of life by disappearing without a trace and his relatives did not know whether he was still alive or had already died ... It was said of him that he died every night but came back to life in the morning, loneliness was his shadow, loneliness and apprehension:

All true wisdom only exists
Far from human beings
In the great loneliness

the shaman Igjugarjuk Knud Rasmussen is said to have taught. In this silence songs are born, they are created in the soul and rise from the bottom of the sea, like water bubbles that float to the surface and burst, this is what the elders say, and it is true, the silence is a storehouse for all the words that I overlooked, and I realize that this solitude, this isolation is the condition for a freedom – which is palpable, tangible: on the road, in the mountains, in the rivers, lakes and fjords. Freedom in Greenland is not a concept, not an idea, not a philosophical theory, but reality. Freedom in Greenland you can breathe, you can smell it, you can touch it, it is as real as freedom can be. And with the feeling of unlimited freedom, I feel something that I know only as something ephemeral, but that lasts longer here, hours, sometimes even days – happiness.

From: Anna Kim, *Invasionen des Privaten*, Graz, 2011 (Literaturverlag Droschl)