



The Nordic Alliance of  
Artists' Residencies on Climate Action

## Writing Commissions December 2024

### POEMS

Pivinnguaq Mørch

#### **Power of Aningaaq – Man of the Moon\***

Here on Earth,  
on the largest island in the world,  
I have become a more frequent visitor,  
a foreigner among nature and its creatures,  
as well as a mere consumer of its resources.

I float on a kayak  
during high summers,  
paddling across the sky  
as a soaring bird,  
I can see everything  
from above.

Because of the incidents that keep me awake at night,  
I prefer the ground during autumn,  
to drive the dogsled  
and watch the northern lights from underneath,  
the icy ground I travel on  
is always a work of art...

... as the ice cap always looks new.  
Travelling the Nunataks  
I become aware that I am not alone,  
I slow down and observe with utmost respect  
the mammals that are living here.



I join the magnificent musk oxen  
watching the northern lights and stars above.  
Realising our shared commonalities.  
We are always aware  
that we are somehow  
connected through the universe.

Up there,  
the biggest you can see  
is my home  
that only very few men have visited  
but no longer visits,  
is the one and only, the great moon.

Sleepiness eventually catches up with me,  
on this land I visit,  
once the strangeness of the recent events has subsided.  
I am never allowed to sleep in peace,  
because of the turmoil that spreads inside me.  
I wake up constantly during the night...

... and must travel to Earth to calm down.  
All the weariness evaporates from my mind  
when I traverse the nature,  
and deliver my message.  
A message people will ultimately  
notice every time I leave the Earth.



Here on a several  
billion-year-old World  
I keep on a watch for the people  
that momentarily dwell here  
like a blink of the eye  
when compared to the age of the Earth  
leaving their tools and remains in the ground.

Peoples tend to travel great distances.  
Some societies were lost in time.  
The traces they left behind usually reclaimed  
by other peoples in other eras, in the same landscapes.  
I find it fascinating.

My force dwells in nature.  
When you alter it, even at minuscular level,  
the consequences are significantly high.  
Consequences can be surprising; can be horrifying.  
They only come to light after severe evaluations

Like right now, I can either make it warmer  
or I can cause sudden snowing  
in the middle of the summer.  
Sometimes I can make constant rain in some places,  
in other places,  
I can make it so hot that it starts burning in flames.



Things can change rapidly.  
Changes can be seen by both eyes in just one day  
and ignored right after.  
Especially, when the focus is eventually blinded,  
equally covered up and left forgotten in an instant.

The thought often  
gives me sleepless nights  
that I need to make a point  
befallen to the fjords, I consider beautiful,  
since my eminent powers  
deserves paramount respect.

Massive lakes high up  
breaks up creating great flows of water  
flushing everything in their paths,  
draining even former giant lakes on its way down.

On the contrary, on this great creation of land,  
lands with constant frost inside of them,  
has evolved to grow trees,  
multiplying and blossoming on the soil  
like no one has ever seen before,  
these are just mere continuations of my powers.



Occasionally, on my way home,  
the moon would be full.  
I'd put my kayak on its place before I enter my home.  
I'd take my furry polar bear skinned clothing off  
and finally lay down on my sleeping platform to rest.

What is the noise I hear?  
It is my elongated stone,  
that levitates and falls  
waking me up from my sleep.  
Something disorderly  
has happened, so I take it up,  
then a tunnel appears,  
that is pointing towards below - to Earth.

Through the tunnel I can see  
the ones, who break the norms  
they can be identified by  
their inhumanely-stretched-long arms,  
so, it is easy to see where I should go first.

I take my weapon of punishment,  
namely a very large tusk of a narwhale,  
and travel to Earth  
whilst holding the tusk tight with both of my hands.  
Repeatedly, I calm myself down,  
before I travel back home again.

*\*According to our mythology, the shaman can visit Aningaaq by doing specific rituals.*

*This poem is written through numerous inspirations from written legends about Aningaaq (the moon).*



## **Power of nature**

Unfortunately,  
one must state that climate change  
is realistically occurring  
when witnessing the consequences of the current conditions.

I remember when I worked as  
an archeologist in Southern Greenland in 2019,  
we were going to finally complete the survey and excavation work  
of archeology colleagues that preceded us.

We arrived at our excavation site  
after a lengthy boat ride,  
and hurriedly went and checked the site,  
with the knowledge and excitement  
of finally starting the work the day after.

When we were closing in towards  
the shore, one of our colleagues reacted  
*Where is the site? There has been an erosion!*  
The shore has become  
a high cliff.



We were so surprised of what we saw  
that we lost our tongues for a while,  
because we had not expected  
a quick and sudden change  
of such lush environment.

The shore  
had become a wall.  
but if you looked closely,  
so many valuable artifacts had become visible.  
The middens were protruding from the wall.

They were just waiting  
to be excavated,  
unfortunately, they were  
also waiting  
to slide down to the sea.

From the layers of the soil  
it was evident that  
this location had been inhabited  
by different peoples of different cultures  
over long time periods.



We were powerlessly watching the  
breaking of the waves  
whilst pulling the middens out.  
Those are the ones we  
dig out with so much care...

... but nature doesn't treat  
them with much respect.  
The ocean will break them apart,  
no matter how much we tell it not to.

The next few days  
of our excavation of those sites,  
near the landslided soils,  
I can say that we had never previously  
excavated so many valuable  
findings.

We found many ancient belongings  
different ulos,  
beads in different sizes,  
human hair from haircuts longtime ago,  
and of course, a lot of animal bones  
were found in those middens.



One is left to wonder,  
what archaeological items  
we might otherwise have found  
if we had not been\_robbed by  
climate change.

I once again traversed  
Greenland  
to take part in  
archeological surveys  
in the High North  
after one month in the South.

Our purpose was to continue an ongoing project  
to survey old settlements in the Thule area,  
to focus on the places,  
we did not get to reach  
when doing fieldwork the previous year.

It turned out, that just like in Southern Greenland  
the coast had dramatically changed  
in a very short time-period – only one year.

The pictures we took were part of  
the evidence we collected.



It is not only the inland ice  
that is melting.  
Permafrost environments  
are following suit,  
they are thawing away as well.

They slide down as if released by a loosened grip,  
behaving unnaturally and  
obliviating everything  
in their tracks.

An avalanche of landslides,  
rapid flows of dirt rumbling down to the sea,  
with a loud, thunderous sound,  
an aftermath of dusts in the air.

Permafrost land when filled with rainwater,  
causes a calving ground.  
Or the heavy strata can slide down quickly,  
as if fleeting away in an instant reaction.



An abandoned settlement  
in a place with semi-subterranean house dwellings,  
in the fjord of Siorapaluk,  
only four house dwellings remained  
out of eleven in total,  
due to landslides in a period of only 5 years.

After interviews with the local Inughuits,  
we found that  
those house dwellings were  
houses of their grandmothers.  
The remaining foundations were only a depression in the ground  
as if nothing had ever existed there before.

We encountered numerous  
tent rings and house dwellings  
of ancient peoples on our many boat rides.  
Sometimes the old former settlements  
could be dated back 4000 years ago,  
but only half of them remained on the shore.

Green tundra plains,  
looking like patchworks,  
with signs of former settlers,  
has concerningly eroded away  
following whole coastlines.



Landslides can be so large  
that it can be scary  
to witness them,  
since they still pose danger  
to human habitations and hunting grounds.

Breaking waves and storms  
continue to erode the shore away  
since it is no longer  
protected by the permanent sea ice.

It turns out that the eminent currents of the sea  
are about to be disrupted by the melting of the ice.  
The constant flow of water  
generates constant streams,  
affecting the whole planet.

I really want to bring priceless archeological objects '*home*'  
for safekeeping in the museums.  
We are currently losing so many ancient artifacts  
that could have given us knowledge about our history.



Losing *them*  
fills me with heartfelt regret,  
*they* keep hurtling in my mind.  
As I keep imagining  
*what is eaten by the waves right now?*

One can say, *they* are turning into sand  
from existence to nonexistence,  
a sign of our loss of history, a matter of storylessness.  
An important tool for understanding our history that could not  
be protected against our own nature. No longer preserved anymore.

What is happening?  
Such large numbers of environmental incidents, constantly happening.  
Drained lakes are  
refilled straightaway.  
Where is the source of all this?

From the inland ice.  
Indeed, so much liquid  
constantly flows out from the inland ice.  
The surface of the inland ice has become shiny,  
because it has started to rain  
despite of the fact  
that it should normally be snowing.



The consequences  
are predictable.  
And the outcomes  
always visible  
on the entire coastline and,  
we cannot avoid them  
since we live in them.

It is as though we are punished  
by an invisible entity,  
with an unstoppable force,  
even though this might not be the case,  
but it leaves me wondering  
when things are so hard to understand

*Translations by Kelly Berthelsen, Pivinnguaq Mørch and Lise Autogena*