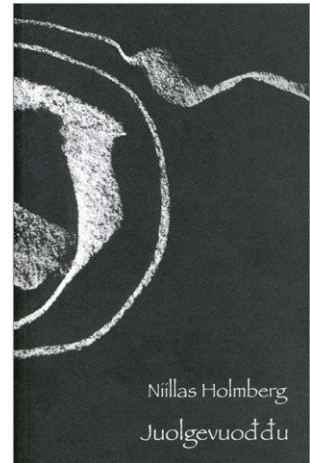


# Niillas Holmberg

## Juolgevuodđu

(Sole)

Illustrations: Inga-Wiktoria Páve



Juolgevuodđu  
ISBN 9788290625899  
Poetry book in Sami  
Illustrations: Inga-Wiktoria Páve  
144 pages, 160 nok

*Juolgevuodđu (Sole)* by the Saami poet Niillas Holmberg is a poetic manifest which emphasizes the connection with land as the defining matter for those with concerns over tomorrow. This compilation celebrates traditional knowledge while questioning its adequacy with the modern world and mind.

The Saami are struggling to protect their lands and livelihoods from the ongoing exploitation by the industrial societies. But what is it that prevents the States from taking everything at once? What lies between the decision makers and the resources of the land that they so aspire?

The answer is the people. But that's the answer only as long as the people still live in connection with their land. Connection brings the inevitable need to preserve and protect. That's why the surest way to the riches for the States is to gradually break this relation. We face this from early childhood as school and media imperceptibly saddle us for the purposes of the capitalist socie-ty.

This book builds up a world of symbols to display the challenges in preserving the immediate relationship with land. It states that we must return to the feet because that's where we're connected. This brings us to another central symbol: *Shoemaker*. *Shoemaker* markets something that seems warm and comfortable. Here is the turning point. The moment we put on the *shoe* is when we offer ourselves to the mechanism of politics, oppression and false promises. replace our values of sustainability and communality with egoism and individuality.

There are *Terns* – a bird species loved by the Saami and getting scarcer and scarcer – who stand up against *Shoemaker*. Like environmental and cultural activists they believe that freedom can only be achieved through facing adversity and sacrificing for truth.

*Birches* represent the subconsciousness of the ecosystem; a system constantly striving for balance and therefore cleaning the marks left behind by humans. Scientific researches show us that the more we produce carbon emissions, the more trees are able to absorb carbon dioxide.

Throughout the book the reader keeps coming across linguistic vocabulary. This is unexpected as we're used to native literature focusing on epic stories or tragic encounters with the white man. This element is indeed one of the merits of the work. Its ambitious goal is to provide under-standing of traditional knowledge in a modern, analytic context. It suggests that poetry can succeed in something that the Western academia so often falls short at.

What to do with a family member who devotes himself to *Shoemaker*? If a corrupt person is part of land, does that make land corrupt as well? Have we made land corrupt? These are questions tickling the *foot sole*. All the poems appear underneath an endless line that continues from page to page. The line forms a circle, thus symbolising the cyclic conception of time, the basis of the indigenous world view.

*Niillas Holmberg* is a Saami poet and a musician from Ohcejohka (Utsjok), Saamiland (occupied by Finland). He is a leading Saami environmental activist known from demonstrations and barri-cades.

*Inga-Wiktoria Páve* belongs to the new wave of Saami artists. She is from Láttvárri (Lannavaara), Saamiland (occupied by Sweden).

So you find this scenery beautiful?  
Why, thank you!

To live is to answer one question.  
The question is land

and I  
to the best of my ability respond  
LAND.

...

It is time for trial  
time for Hamlet to ask, To have  
or not to have rights.

Your Honor, members of the jury, ladies and  
gentlemen

I plead that water must still be scooped  
along the stream hereafter.

English translations by Niillas Holmberg and Annikki Herranen-Tabibi

Niillas Holmberg's (b. 1990) previously published books by DAT:

*Oaidnaleapmái, Čáhcesiellu*, 2016

*Amas amas amasmuvvat*, 2013

(In Norwegian *Så den fremmede ikke blir mer fremmed*, 2015. Saami Council's Prize for Literature 2014. Nominated for the 2015 Nordic Council Literature Prize.

*Dego livččen oaidnán iežan*, 2009