

INUIT CREATION

Raven made the world and the waters with beats of his wings.

He had the powers of both a man and bird, and could change from one to the other simply by pulling his beak above his head as one lifts up a mask.

His earth was dark and silent. He had created water and mountains, and had filled the land with growing pea-pod plants.

After five days, one of the pea-pods burst open; out popped a fully-grown man, the first to walk on Raven's new earth.

At first the man was dizzy and confused. He drank from a pool of water at his feet, which made him feel a little better.

Raven had been soaring above his earth when he caught sight of the movement below.

For a long time Raven and the man stared at each other without saying a word.

Finally Raven spoke:

"Who are you and where did you come from?"

"I was born from that pea-pod" replied the man, pointing to the plant.

Raven was astonished. He had made the pea plant himself without any idea that something like this would happen. However, he was pleased that his earth would now have inhabitants.

"Have you eaten?" asked Raven.

"I have had a drink of water..." replied the man.

"Wait here for me," said Raven, who lowered his beak and took the form of a bird. With a flurry of dark feathers, he flew off into the night sky.

The man waited for Raven for four days.

Raven returned carrying two raspberries and two heathberries.

"These are for you. They shall grow all over the earth to feed you."

Man devoured the berries in one gulp; Raven realized that berries alone wouldn't be enough to feed his hungry creation.

Raven then began working clay to form two fat mountain sheep. When he waved his black wings over them, the sheep sprang into life and bounded into the hills.

He made more and more sheep. Man looked at them so hungrily that Raven carefully placed them far up in the mountains so that Man wouldn't eat all of them at once.

Raven went on making fish, birds and other animals, and waved his wings over each one to bring it to life.

Each one he put someplace out of Man's reach so that he wouldn't kill them all – the fish in the rivers and the birds in the air. Already Raven could see other men growing in pea-pods, and they were soon going to emerge hungry too.

Raven created a huge bear from the same clay, to make sure Man had something to fear.

After a few days, Raven noticed that Man was lonely.

Raven went off to a quiet corner of the earth where Man couldn't see what he was doing.

He started building a figure out of clay. It looked like Man but was smaller and softer. Raven brushed his wings over the new figure, and the lovely being sat up and looked at Man.

"This is Woman, your helper and companion," said Raven.

Man was very pleased. Together they filled the earth with their children and before long Raven's earth filled with the sound of many voices, and overflowing with many forms of life.

