The Louse and the Worm

An Inuit origin story

In the beginning, men did not have any lice in their bodies.

The lice traveled about in tiny kayaks from fjord to fjord.

Then one day, a louse and a worm were paddling their kayaks and they decided to race toward land to see who would be the first to climb onto a man. Man’s armpits were so warm and enjoyable that they chose them as their destination.

Thus they could be heard as they paddled, shouting, “The armpits! The armpits!”

The worm was the better paddler, but his thongs broke owing to his powerful strokes.

So the louse overtook him and came to land first. He settled forever more in man’s armpits.

When the worm finally arrived, he crawled into the earth and hid there out of shame.