The Seven Point Mazzogollo

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can do anything. Jeremiah began to shiver in fear. "I do believe in you, I think." You must, you must, was the answer. A cold terror crept over and conquered his will. Reason fought with desire. "No, you ain't real. I can't do anything I want. I'm scared." Jeremiah's voice rose in fear and he clutched for something to hold onto. I'm sorry you don't believe in me any more, sighed the glowing orb, I'm really sorry. Goodbye. The shimmering arm slowly unwound itself and disappeared into the void once again.

It was four days before a trapper heard the lonely cry of a dog and followed it into the Great Swamp to the base of the huge tree. High above, a cold and hungry dog huddled in a corner of a tree house and cried. Not far from the tree was the Moon Looker. People weren't rightly sure what had happened to him. The doctor from the swamp town came out and looked him over for a few minutes. It seemed he had fallen from some high place, maybe the big tree. They buried him there at its base and forgot him.

At night, the moonlight falls upon the simple grave. A dog cries softly, and life in the swamp pauses in a silent requiem.


The Seven Point Mazzogollo

IN THE uppermost part of the world where all directions are south and the only colors are white and blue, there once lived a polar bear named Mutsanac. He was not a native of this region — indeed, nothing resided this far north — but was, instead, a bear with a mission; a mission to which he had devoted his life thus far and had resolved to continue until success or death came to him.

This quest began far back in his cubhood. From his earliest memories he had felt that he alone was the chosen one — the bear selected by the deity he sought to change the lives of the animals of the Arctic — to relieve, by his discovery, all of their suffering and make their lives and souls
pure. Often he had lectured to an assembled body of tundra mice, seals, wolves, other bears, trying to convince them that he would succeed — that they must pattern their lives in the way he prescribed if they wished to reap the benefits offered. Some merely laughed and continued to live in the reprehensible way they had before. Others wanted to believe, and said they did, but often slipped back into their old, natural way of life. At least there was hope for them. A very few followed his teachings exactly, one or two even going on junkets of their own.

Mutsanac looked around at the vast whiteness rising on all sides of him. Overhead the sky threatened a storm. The wind was rising and the first flakes of snow slanted to earth, their frequency increasing each moment.

“Good,” Mutsanac mumbled to himself. He had long ago acquired the habit of talking aloud when he was alone. “The more there are, the more chance of finding,” he touched his nose with his paw, “the Mazzogollo.”

And what a find It would be! He still felt a shiver of ecstasy even after having searched for so many years. His heart felt purer whenever It was mentioned.

Some beasts of the Arctic had long worshipped the Seven-Pointed Mazzogollo. It was reputed to be the most gloriously lustrous snowflake that had ever existed — large as the paw of a full grown bear, delicately laced in the most exquisite manner and, the most holy thing, with seven distinct and separate points. Even Mutsanac himself found such perfection unbelievable at times but he quickly shook this feeling off. It was evil to believe thus, to doubt. True, he had never seen It nor did he know anyone who had, but Its existence was well known. Only three thousand years before, a seal, the immortal Saint Gallooochee, had found It. Oh, such blessings as were bestowed upon the animals of the Arctic at that time! The story had passed down from generation to generation. Mutsanac’s father had told him of this wonderful happening when he was only a tiny cub in paws.

Mutsanac lay full-length on his belly and pointed his nose toward the North Pole, the hub of life. “Oh mighty Mazzogollo,” he prayed, touching his paw to his nose, “lead me to Your Lacy Presence so that I might bestow upon my
fellow creatures of the Arctic the blessings of pureness, regimentation, everlasting life, introjection, and grant to them freedom from ugliness, hunger, and 'the natural way of life'.” The last five words were said like a curse.

Harder and harder blew the wind and the snow fell in great, twisting flurries of motion. Mutsanac lumbered through the storm, his head down so far he occasionally stepped on his nose with his forepaws. His eyes swept over the surface of the snow. White — white in the air and on the earth and all around.

A small, six-pointed flake landed on Mutsanac's nose and melted there.

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Dream Only

All the earth is a massive unit
Cold and hard and porus.
While the numbers roll,
A high wind comes upon us
Which bows our heads
And humbles my heart.
I think that I shall cry . . .
Silently,
Inside.

Every strand of strewn hair,
So real upon your face, molds a veil
Fluttering in the sweeping air.
When your lips speak gratitude your eyes speak compassion,
And I turn and look to the dew-sprinkled ground,
And walk away,
And slowly crush the green-silver-shining blades—
With numb and humble silence
Inside.

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