Putigarok

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PUTIGAROK

—a game of hide-and-seek played by Inuit children

Tannik — White Man

An assortment of children
play on the hillside,
ducking and giggling behind
the drowsy limbs of a willow.
Their faces are dots of light —
reflections of pure energy.

A young girl closes her eyes
and counts backwards
30, 29, 28,...3-2-1-hereI come
and she searches
past red brick homes with heated
sidewalks, past the Quik
Shop with pizza-in-a-minute,
past the park where her father
taught her how to fly
a purple bat kite.

Inuit — North Slope Eskimo

An Eskimo girl with a face
like a full moon pretends
to be an old woman
and curls up to sleep,
but when she awakens
her children are gone, taken
by a terrible polar bear.
Frantically, she searches
past government-built houses
with caribou skins drying
on the porch, past smokehouses
full of fresh humpback salmon,
past the Trading Post with
candy bars for $1.50,
past the North Slope Burroughs
Office where her father once
worked.

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