

Paul Brooke

Julianehåb, Greenland

In 1953 under the Concentration Policy, the Danish Government moved a large number of Inuit villagers into Julianehåb.

At the entrance of Julianehåb harbor,
icebergs slowly rub their
enormous bellies against each other,
chafing pieces of icerock into the ocean water.

As morning begins,
dark-haired men load sheep
destined for the slaughterhouse
into orange long-boats.
Uneasily, the sheep mull around,
horns turned down,
scraping at the bones of the hull.

Both old and young Inuit men
stand in line at the cafeteria after work,
waiting to buy Danish beer
with government ration coupons.

The cafeteria becomes louder,
bottles and tin cups clink and clank.
Eskimos in cowboy boots and western jeans
yell for more booze, stagger around,
go outside to piss.
Steam rises from the dirt,
clouds Julianehåb in yellow mist.
Through drunken denseness,
a rifle shot sounds
as the rest of the sheep wait.