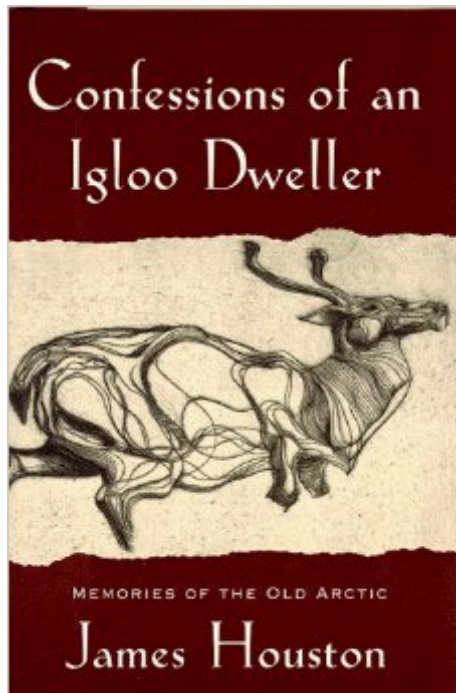


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Confessions Of An Igloo Dweller: Memories Of The Old Arctic



Synopsis

James Houston lived among Inuit in the Canadian Arctic between 1948 and 1962. He slept in their igloos, ate raw fish and seal meat, wore skin clothing, traveled by dog team, hunted walrus, learned how to build a snowhouse, and raised a family. While doing so, he helped change the Arctic.

Impressed by the natural artistic skills of the people, he encouraged the development of exhibits and sales of Inuit art in the south - sales that have brought millions of dollars to its creators. *Confessions of an Igloo Dweller*, a wonderful piece of storytelling, recounts Houston's fascinating and often hilarious adventures among a confident, smiling people who spoke no English. Taking readers into the heart of Inuit culture, it joins the tradition established by Fridtjof Nansen, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Farley Mowat. A book full of adventure and anecdote as well as the delights of art and the hazards of cold, it is illustrated with forty drawings by the author.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First this is a book about art. If you have ever wondered how those most beautiful Eskimo sculptures and prints have found their way to your local gallery; this book tells you how. Mr. Houston was the first artist to recognize and search out the Inuit artforms and to deliver them to the art markets "outside". In every detail, name by name, you can read about the Inuit art culture from the very first stone figures and bone sculptures, to the latest prints. Second this is a book about Arctic. Adventure on an epic scale. Mr. Houston's honeymoon was one of the very few trips from east to west across Baffin Island by sled. Mr and Mrs. Houston spent years in the Arctic living in the Inuit way; both their sons spoke Inuktitut in preference to English and preferred raw seal meat to... well

that was all there was to eat. Sadly there are in this book no prints of the Inuit art, nor photos of the artists, nor any example of the art described in the text. For all the journeys by sled, boat, plane, and on foot there are no suitable maps. For a book about a culture that is so completely linked to geography, there are no maps for the reader to follow nor plates for the art lover to love. The most astonishing event of the book occurs on page 9. A very young Mr. Houston steps off of a plane in the Hudson's Bay Arctic, looks around, and flatly refuses to live any place else; He stays for 15 years. You can add Mr. Houston to the list with Barry Lopez, William Vollmann, Farley Mowat, and John McPhee; those writers that get the Arctic Experience

This is one of the finest first-person, historical narratives I've read for many years. Mr. Houston provides a unique, non-judgemental series of observations and first-hand stories about the Inuit and his own experiences living among them and working with them and, most importantly, learning from them. He is very honest in relating his own foibles and potentially life-threatening mistakes. His style is very easy to read and personal and I could not put this book down after starting it. Mr. Houston lived a highly privileged and unique life among a pre-literate but very evolved group during a crucial turning point for their culture. This is a rare and wonderful narrative.

Simply a great book that humorously describes the culture of the Inuit and other northern peoples from a person who lived with them and learned their language. I think it's the only book that I have read repeatedly.

This book was a delight to read. Mr. Houston's admiration for the Inuit culture is evident on every page. Many of the passages and stories are thought provoking and educational. I especially enjoyed his descriptions of bewilderment turned to enlightenment by such unassuming teachers.

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