

CILLEM QUELLRA

*In December 1999, a Yup'ik man from Atmautluak, Alaska
disappeared. Glimpses of his ghost were later seen by villagers.*

During an eternity of Alaskan winter
an Eskimo hunter from Atmautluak

disappeared in the wild. Searchers
discovered his snowmobile

and the rigid corpse of a friend,
but he was never found. Later,

towards slow-thawing spring, villagers
began to see him, feather-light

and wary as a small bird,
standing on the tops of trees

or drifting on the wind. Elders say,
"He was made cold by the universe,

cillem quellra. If you touch him
his timid spirit will return."

They say the same thing happened
to a small boy thirty years ago,

who when chased by dogsled
left no tracks in new snow. From

a quiet bank of the Kuskokwim, I hear him
whistling from across the frozen river.