

Lesson 2:

Inuka

Ann Ang

White as light, and never knowing snow,
Inuka raises his snout. Noontime
in his twenty-seventh year: (it) he
lumbers to the pool in humid stasis,
cooled by national air-conditioning. 5
Time to put down the
adopted bear-child, whose calcified joints
have carried him past
an average lifespan, whose
blunt nose has snubbed 10
our enrichment activities.
Inuka, a part of us will die
when you chase that last solar disc
below the horizon. Death's steel tongue
licks away our North Pole at 15
the equator. To keep you safe
we built frost into the air
melting ice-caps. In today's
noon sun, our shadow is so short
we have lost our spirit. 20
Because we do not believe in souls,
you, our snow-sprite
will not haunt us.

Inuka was the first and only polar bear to be born in a zoo in the tropics. He spent his life at the Singapore Zoo. On 25th April 2018, Inuka was put down at the age of twenty-seven due to poor health.