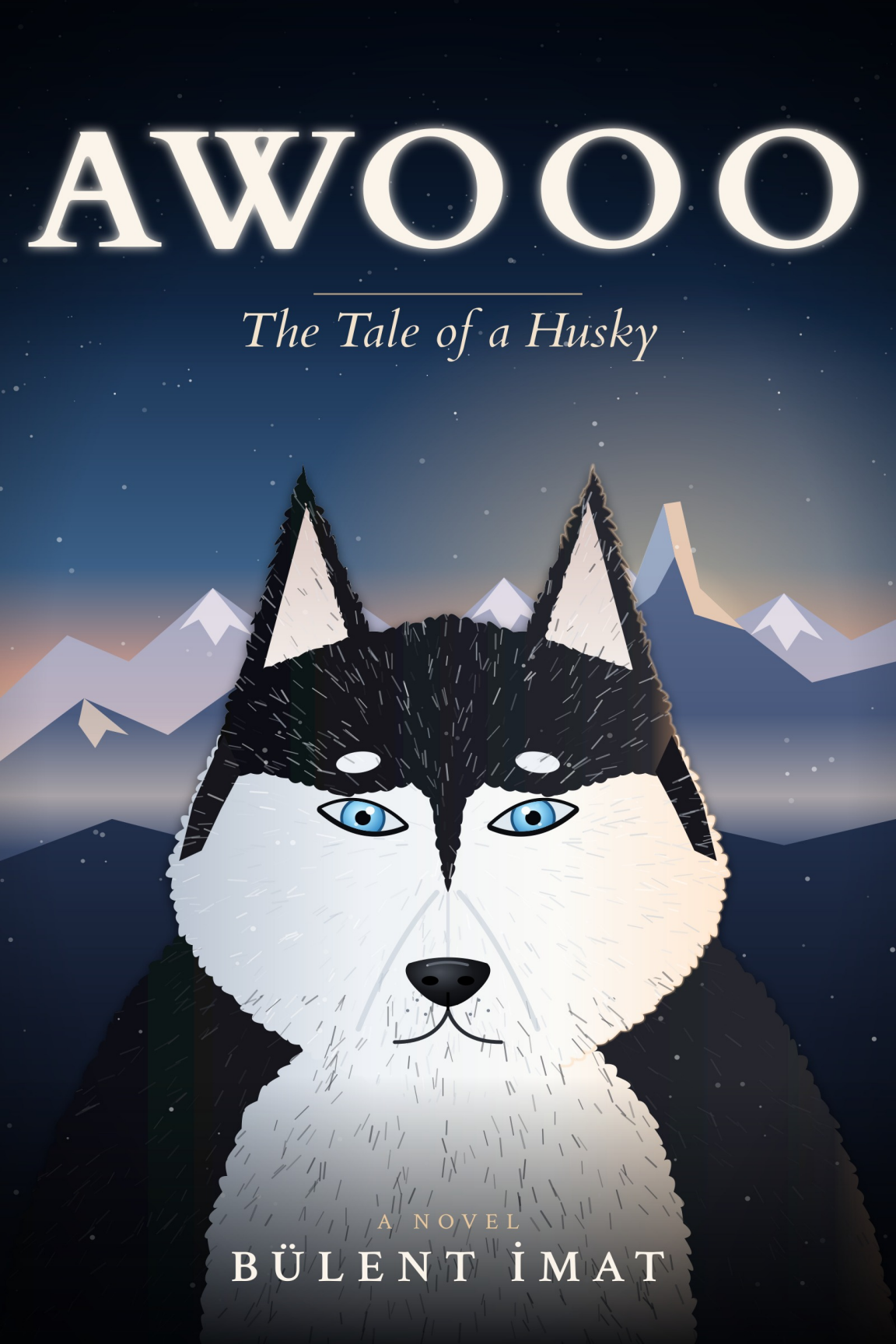
AWOOO

The Tale of a Husky



A NOVEL

BÜLENT İMAT

AWOOO

The Tale of a Husky

BÜLENT İMAT

"It was the answer, in terms, not of speech, but of love."

— Jack London, *The Call of the Wild* (1903)

For Güney —
south by name, north by nature,
and home wherever he lies down.

Foreword

I MET GÜNEY in Heidelberg in June 2019, in the week the linden trees flower. He was almost two years old. He had already lived a life before me, in Poland, where he was born, and in the city where I found him, and that first afternoon he considered me with the polite reserve of someone being introduced to a new colleague. Then he took the leash I had brought for him out of my bag and carried it into the next room. I have been trying to live up to that moment ever since.

We have built a home three times together. In Germany, where we learned each other's habits one walk at a time. In Türkiye, where he slept through the summers on cool stone floors and discovered that half a street can stop to admire one dog. And, since March 2025, in Switzerland, where I watched him step onto snow that did not end and saw, for the first time, a creature standing exactly where he belonged.

Between those homes there were trains, ferries, buses, cable cars, roads, an aeroplane, and twelve countries. In every one of them strangers bent down to greet him. Children, border officials, waiters, old men on station benches. Almost all of them walked away lighter than they arrived. I have watched it happen so often that I have stopped thinking of it as chance.

People sometimes say I have taken him everywhere. The truth runs the other way. Every time I packed boxes, unsure of what I was leaving or what I would find, there was one thing I never needed to pack. It was already standing by the door, waiting for the word to go.

This book is not a memoir. The places and milestones are real; the scenes, most of the people and, above all, the voice are imagined. But I have

tried to imagine honestly, and to write him as he is: stubborn, theatrical, curious, generous with strangers, and entirely himself.

He is nine now. There is silver around his mouth. He still reaches the door before I reach the leash.

An animal does not ask you to become a better person. It simply assumes you already are, and waits, patiently, on the other side of a door, for you to catch up.

Bülent İmat