

Fragments of Imaginary Seas

1. (Sep. 1862, Ocean of St. Frederic)

Yet another quiet day. The sea is bleak and still. The sky is low and without any colors. The light that reaches us is pale and powerless. Our world is gray and white. Nothing more.

Albert takes his samples and performs his hydrological measurements. He is on the starboard side with his back in my direction. Silent. He has not touched on what happened yesterday. Does not even meet my eyes. He has completely gone into his work, as if the answer to what we experienced would be found in his instrument.

I have tried to complete my tasks, but without any success. My concentration is gone. My energy as well. I can not think of anything besides what happened yesterday. I can not see any reason to continue, as if nothing had happened.

I will try to describe it, even though I'm not sure I have the correct words.

The temperature was just above two degrees Celsius. The wind insignificant. The water was thick and dark, as it gets just before it's freezing. We passed the outer edge of the icemantel and we had the Wolfpeak in the east, at the horizon. We could barely see it.

These were areas that nobody had measured before us.

We were almost still. The boat moved slowly.

It was Albert who discovered the ripples. They were five hundred feet away. It looks like a circle, with a diameter of about fifty feet. As we got closer, we saw that the ocean bubbled, and that water vapor began to form on the surface – like a thick mist.

At ten feet distant, it was obvious that something we never observed previously happened in the water.

The sea was boiling.

As we got closer, the heat struck us and we had to turn around.

Albert immediately tried to find explanations. He spoke of an underwater source of hot water, about gases that responded to the depths of hundreds of feet, and about chemical substances we may not yet know about.

We stopped about twenty feet away from the circle and observed the water. Albert took some samples from the sea, and I tried to sketch the phenomenon to the best of my ability.

We lay there for an hour. The circle kept its perfect shape. The water boiled intensively. The steam was heavy and thick.

At noon the first sound came. I first thought it was in my head, but then I realized that it actually came out of the ocean. It was a weak, monotonous tone, like a distant horn.

I asked Albert if he heard anything. He said no. But then the sound rose, became stronger. It came from the ocean.

Then we saw the light. The boiling was illuminated from below by a some kind of huge source of power.

All of this could certainly been explained by our common scientific methods. Albert at meant that. There was probably some kind of underground volcanic eruption that we witnessed.

What happened next is more difficult, not to say impossible, to understand or explain. Maybe my senses fooled me. Albert claims that he neither saw nor heard anything, but I do not believe him.

From the boiling sea a swarm of insects crept up. They measured at least ten centimeters between their wings, they were dark black and gleamed like the skinn of a fish in the light that came from the sea. There must have been millions of them.

They rose straight up. Higher and higher. Like ants swarming and chasing each other up twords the sky to see who is the most suitable to fertilize the queen. After a minute, those who did have the strangth begain to fall to the surface and they died. The sea was soon darkened by the insects that lay floating on the sea.

Albert turned around and ordered the boat to turn. He said nothing. Just looked away from me.

2. (Dec. 1753, North of the Ilands of Georg)

Yesterday we reached the end of the world as we know it. Frome here on...