

## **Fires of the earth**

Manuscript/Text recordings

### **Part1**

#### *Premonitions*

This may come on time,  
from the heavens  
in the form of fiery bolts and flashes of lightning;  
another time  
as the flame of war,  
which has consumed whole cities and settlements.

#

In springtime, the rainstorms had been unusually heavy.  
Dark red, yellow and black striped insects were also seen here,  
as long and thick around as the end-joint of a full-grown man's thumb.  
At other locations the noise of musical instruments underground and the  
sounds of bells ringing in the air was reported.  
More lambs and calves were born deformed than usual.  
One lamb had the claws of a predatory bird instead of cloven hooves.

#

A while before sunset, a thick cloud piled up here above the cloister, or  
above the edge of the slope beyond.  
It was not unlike a work of sculpture, forming a wreath that was not round  
but rather oval in shape, like the ones often set on the stems of ocean  
ships.

The bulge in the middle was light blue with branches, curls and spheres, extending out into the wreath itself. These were coloured dark red, bright red, black, reddish black, yellow, pink and saffron, with other colours mixed in as well, which I know not the words to describe.

A great number of people observed this strange cloud or portent which hung there in the sky

without moving,  
until it disappeared  
instantaneously  
just before sunset.

Around midmorn , in clear and calm weather, a black haze of sand appeared to the north of the mountains.

The cloud was so extensive that in a short time it had spread over the entire area, and so thick that it caused darkness indoors and coated the earth so that tracks could be seen.

A light drizzle, which fell from that black cloud that day, turned this powder into black, inky liquid.

#

In a stream, which was later covered by lava, were seen a great number of monsters of various shapes.

Fireballs lay in heaps like foxfire.  
A bolt of lightning struck a lambshed,  
killing lambs  
and splitting one of the supports from end to end,  
leaving its inner sides blackened  
as if scorched by red-hot iron.

#

Throughout the country  
it was a general disgrace  
to see  
how common thieves had become gentlemen.

#

After I had fallen asleep I saw a regal figure approach me who said:  
„Everything you suspect is true, and it is because you have failed to teach  
the young people properly.“

His words hurt me deeply and I asked him what it was I should preach.

And just as God in this way gave various signs to men while they were  
awake, so also did He speak to many in their sleep, so that they dreamt of  
events which later came to pass.

It would also be poorly received by those people who scorn and belittle the  
value of all dreams.

###

## Part 2

### *Atmosphere 1*

A great rain poured down through the dark cloud, even though the wind was from the southeast.

It was the colour of bilge, or had a bluish tinge, and was so strongly odorous that people suffering from chest ailments could hardly breathe and nearly lost consciousness.

All the migratory birds and other nesting birds fled and the eggs which they left behind were scarcely edible because of their ill odour and sulphurous taste.

Iron turned rust-red,  
timber lost its colour and turned grey  
from the downpour  
of salty and sulphurous rain.

When it could be seen,  
the sun appeared as a red ball of fire,  
the moon was as red as blood,  
and when  
rays of their light fell upon the earth  
it took on the same colour.

#

This sad week, more poison fell from the sky than words can describe: ash, volcanic hairs, rain full of sulphur and salpetre, all of it mixed with sand. The snouts, nostrils and feet of livestock grazing or walking on the grass turned bright yellow and raw.

All water went tepid and light blue in colour and rocks and gravel slides turned grey. All the earth's plants burned, withered and turned grey, one after another.

The first to wither were those plants which bore leaves, then the sedges were checked,

and the horsetails were the last to go,  
and would later  
be the first to return.

All of this was caused by the lack of sunshine, clean air and fresh winds. The foul smell of the air, bitter as seaweed and reeking of rot for days on end, was such that many people, especially those with chest ailments, could no more than half-fill their lungs of this air, particularly if the sun was no longer in the sky.

#

Great earthquakes occurred.

Some of them lifted the earth straight up and down again, other crossed the land from the northwest like swells at sea.

The frozen ground split apart with no small thudding, cracking and jerking.

When these tremors ceased, sounds were heard underground like a whine in some places, or the growl of a dog in others.

Even though I had heard these sorts of sounds described when a glacier surged, I had been reluctant to believe the stories, as, under the influence

of old superstitions, people believed and said many things like this.

I once happened to be out in my storehouse with two other men. Both they and I heard a sound like that of an ox bellowing far in the distance, although we did not expect any to be in the area.

We disagreed as to where the bellowing was, and while we were comparing our views on this there came another howl, many hundred yards down under the ground, and gradually rising up under the house, its strength ebbing as it came closer until it came to an end just under the floor on which I was standing.

The floor itself seemed to quiver or tremble slightly.

A sound like the trill of a whimbrel was often heard in the buildings there.

The farm house stands on a porous hill of lava and when the wind blows through the lava from a certain direction thee sounds are heard.

Now I realised that all these sounds were of natural origin, and were not the crying of the „hidden people“.

They were merely the sounds of the wind, of pushing and rearranging in the veins and cracks of the earth after the emptying that had taken place, or of the storms which had recently swept over and blown into the canyons in such great measure.

#

It would be unfortunate if these memories should be lost and forgotten upon my departure, as have so many other works of God which have, for lack of care, been lost forever.

###

### **Part 3**

#### *Lava*

The convulsions of the underground fires began with the earth heaving upwards, with a great screaming and noise of wind from its depths, then

splitting asunder,  
ripping and tearing,  
as if a crazed animal

were tearing something apart.

Flames and fire soon stretched upwards from each of the hillocks.

Great slabs of rock and greenswards were cast up indescribably

high into the air,  
backwards and forwards,  
with great crashes,  
flares of fire and spouts of sand,  
smoke and fumes.

The liquid fire poured forth over the land so that everything became mixed together.

It dammed up the river, so that the valley filled with water, after which it crossed the river bed to burn down the farmstead and continued east along the slopes.

In the path of the stream was a stretch of old lava, under and through which the flood of fire was eating its way, with such rushing sounds, winds and noises under the earth, that it was amazing to hear, and scorching the older lava which burned like woodchips in a coalpit and melted down like copper in a crucible.

The outermost layer of crust, of the older lava that remained behind could be swept off like dross.

The older lava, which was thus melted down or dissolved, and mixed with the new stream of fire, turned more brownish-black in colour and became more finely grained when it cooled again, than that which lay under it. This became coarser and more blue in colour.

The flood of fire  
flowed with the speed  
of a great river  
swollen with meltwater  
on a spring day.

In the middle of the flood of fire great cliffs and slabs of rock were swept along, tumbling about like large whales swimming, red-hot and glowing. When they struck something solid in their path or to the side of it, or if two of these great masses struck each other or were crushed together, they cast up such great sparks and bursts of flames hither and thither that it was terrifying to watch.

But it went even farther: as the fire poured and tumbled into the water it was turned into fuel and began itself to combust as if it were the purest of oils.

#

The waters rose more quickly than they had expected and flooded church, house and cowshed alike.

The farmers had to tear the roof off the cowshed and, with ropes and winches, managed to pull the cows up between the rafters.

Because of the blizzards of sleet and other inclement weather which followed they were unable to leave straight away and had to remain there for several more days.



The water which flooded the farm bubbled and boiled in the heat. On its surface the farmers and their households saw two dark grey birds swimming. They were slightly larger than the type of ducks known as teals and were most given to diving where the bubbling of the boiling water was the greatest. They were so quick that the farmers could not get within range to shoot them.

#

The fire went over the falls, the fourth and final terrible surge of lava poured forth from the canyon with boiling sounds, cracking and smashing and such quaking underground, as if everything were likely to break apart. This brought on so much thunder and lightning, that scarcely a moment passed between bolts for days on end. Flashes of fire were everywhere around us both indoors and out. All week long neither sun nor sky could be seen for the thick clouds of fumes and smoke which blanketed the area.

#

The shrieking continued, accompanied by quaking, thunder and lightning, with a flow of fire behind the mountains which dried up the river. All that week it rained water or brine, with fog and smoke, thunder and lightning. There was such a mass of fire beyond the mountains that it dried up and combusted all the lakes and streams which had previously coursed the gravel flats, so that I was able to make a completely dry crossing to the eastern region

#

A great spout of flame shot upwards into the air accompanied by a terrible surge of fire, with cracking and thudding continuing for a full five days. An indescribable amount of the fire swirled and churned into this orifice, with splashes, loud whining and spoutings, such as happens when liquids are poured into an empty container with only a single spout or hole.

This flood of fire filled the canyon and all the lowland area.

This surge of fire, which was the final in the series here, was the most threatening and the most powerful.

Omniscient and Almighty God  
directed its flow  
between the flows of lava  
which had preceded it  
and had now cooled  
and were like stone walls  
on both sides .

The flood of lava spilled out of the canyon and poured forth with frightening speed, crashing, roaring and thundering. When the molten lava ran into wetlands or streams of water, the explosions were as loud as if many cannon were fired at one time.

All that day and night the thunderous crashing was so great that everything shuttered and shook,

and the earthquakes  
made every timber crack  
again and again.

#

Those terrors that fell over and upon us here with one fire raging to the west of us and another to the north and east, I can hardly describe. The portals opening outward between these stretches of burning lava stood at about midmorn, on the one side, to half-past one on the other and the clear signs of this will stand until the end of the world.

#

All the ornaments of the church,  
its books  
and burial implements  
burned as well,  
as did the beautiful bell.

###

## **Part 4**

### *Prayer*

To all my countrymen worthy of honour and love,  
born and yet unborn,  
of higher or lower rank,  
to whose ears or eyes it may reach,  
for their instruction  
and education  
that they may know their Creator's mind  
and His marvellous works.

May it serve us all well in avoiding God's angry fire,  
so that we may,  
when the natural warmth and fire of our flesh is extinguished  
to make way for the all-pervasive cold of death,  
be released from all the fires of lust and evil,  
cleansed in the fiery oven of temptation,  
be found in our faith more precious than gold.

Thus, on the day of the Lord's Revelation,  
when He shall appear in a fiery flame,  
the elements burn with supernatural fire,  
the world stand all aflame, and the damned be cast into eternal fire,  
shall God lead us into that shelter of eternal glory,  
free from the volcanic haze.

###

## Part 5

### *Atmosphäre 2*

The weather was quiet  
with a light wind from the south.

Far into the winter,  
when the moon sailed  
through the clouds  
those surrounding it  
would appear bright yellow.

The bluish colour  
remained on the ground  
for some time.

The thunderings and great roarings now came from some distance to the northwest behind the mountains with earthquakes and a constant humming and rushing sound, like that of a great waterfall or many bellows being blown at one time, and the noise and rumbling from this direction continued.

The weather was quiet.  
There was a light wind from the north  
and so great were the showers of ash  
and sand which blew down from every ridge  
that we could just make out the outlines  
of the farm and church,  
even though they stand  
on high ground.

There was hardly enough daylight to make it possible to work indoors without light.

In the evening the wind died down until it was only a gentle sea breeze.

The area was one continuous sea of flame.

#

We could see the edges or the bottom of a frighteningly large, black sandcloud, which wound its way towards us, whirling and tumbling, up from the western crater.

Much of this cloud spread over a wide area, spewing sand and chunks of pumice.

The farmers could no longer keep their flocks together

and the sheep wandered off  
hither and thither,  
into all sorts  
of straits and byways.

The clouds rose so high that the zenith there was seldom more than a quarter of the sky to be seen, and sometimes none of it.

When two clouds came together and the humours in them became too heavy, a putrid-smelling sandy downpour fell from them with lightning accompanied by claps of thunder, even though the surrounding weather was clear and fine.

Bitter rain caused almost unbearable soreness to the eyes or bare skin, as well as a sense of dizziness.

Some of the drops made holes in the pigweed leaves upon which it fell, and left scorched marks on the hides of newly born sheep.

The intolerable reek and odour from the western canyon was such that from its cloud the smell was as if burning coal had been doused with urine or other acrid substance.

From the eastern canyon the smell was like burning wet weeds or some such slimy material, all of this mixed together.

###

## Part 6

### *Fire Sermon*

The skies continued to be heavily overcast with the same thunder and lightning, and rumbling and thudding in the earth.

But as the weather was quiet, I proceeded to the church, along with all of those people who could manage to do so, both former residents and newer arrivals.

I was filled with sorrow at the thought that this might well be the last service to be held in the church, as the terror which now threatened and approached ever nearer appeared likely to destroy it.

As we approached, the clouds of hot vapour and fog coming from the fire farther down the river channel were so thick that the church could hardly be seen, or its outline could only be hazily seen, from the doors of the cloister building.

Claps of thunder  
were followed by such great flashes of lightning,  
in series after series,  
that they lit up the inside of the church  
and  
the bells  
echoed the sound

Great as was the calamity which had come upon us and threatened us yet further, and taught both me and others to pray to God with proper meekness that He in His mercy should not be so quick to destroy us and this His house.



Both myself and all the others in the church were completely unafraid there inside its walls. No one showed any signs of fleeing or leaving during the service, which I had made slightly longer than usual.

Now no length of time spent talking to God could be too long. Each and every person was without fear asking His mercy and submitting to His will.

I have no reason to believe  
otherwise  
than that every man was prepared to die there,  
if this would have pleased Him,  
and would not have left  
even if things had become worse,  
because now  
it was impossible  
to see where there was a safe place.

After the service concluded and men went to see how the fire had advanced, it turned out that it had come not a foot nearer than before. During the time which had elapsed, it had collected and piled up in the same place, layer upon layer, in a downward-sweeping channel some 70 fathoms wide and 20 deep,

and will rest there  
in plain sight  
until the end of the world,  
unless transformed once again.

###

## **Part 7**

### *Foxes*

Foxes made their homes on the deserted farms,  
One vixen gave birth to her kits in the hayshed  
where she was killed along with her brood  
by travellers

###

## Lamento I

### *Animals*

Once a whole pint bottle of communion wine which stood on the altar during the service that day turned into slush.

Things were quiet in the spring, but late in the spring the sounds of much thundering were heard from the clouds of smoke.

On the first day of summer and again on the first day of winter water monsters were seen in the waters, which took various forms, large and small. They struggled there against a strong current, certainly 60 fathoms in length, during a good part of the day. They were seen once again later, but after the waters had subsided and turned elsewhere there has been no further trace of them.

#

As the fires reached so high into the air that time, we set out on a wood-gathering expedition down to the tidal flats, where we had light from this fire to guide us over the difficult patches in the night darkness.

But no description can equal the sight.

#

All the wetlands were so soaked in poison  
that no animal would graze there.  
Everything was covered with sand.

No one could take their milking sheep with them, as the animals fled in all directions.

Any remaining animals huddled together in small groups, numbed by the terrors which hung over them, or darted about calling piteously;

some  
simply lay down  
and died  
in their tracks.

There are hardly words to describe how the sheep just withered away. No one had the foresight to see that it would have been for the best to slaughter them all while they still had flesh on their bones.

Later in the summer People slaughtered what sheep they could when it became obvious there was no hope for new hay to feed them or possibility for them to fend for themselves over the winter.

The sheep were so thin, that from 12 older wethers slaughtered here once, only some three pounds of suet were obtained.

as the winter wore on None of the few remaining horses could have borne either a man or a body to church.

They died in such numbers, that one Sunday morning, 20 horses dropped dead in their tracks.

#

*The poisoning effects of the fires thus affected and killed horses, sheep and cattle; the horses lost all their flesh, the skin began to rot off along the spines of some of them, the hair of the tail and mane rotted and came off if pulled sharply. Hard, swollen lumps appeared at joints, especially the fetlocks. Their heads became swollen and disfigured, and their jaws so weak they could hardly bite off or eat grass, as what little they could chew fell out of their mouths again. Their innards decayed, the bones shrank and lost all marrow. Some of those which had hanks set in their hide soon enough from their head all the way back past the shoulders did manage to survive.*

*The sheep were affected even more wretchedly. There was hardly a part on them free of swellings, especially their jaws, so large that they protruded from the skin where it lay close to the bone. Large growths appeared on their rip joints at the chest, on their hips and legs, bowing the legs or making them look bowed because the swellings grew on alternating sides. Both bones and gristle were as soft as if they had been chewed. In some of them the lungs, liver and heart bloated, in others they shrank; all the innards were mouldering and flabby, full of sand and worms, one of flesh there were only remnants, as could only be expected.*

What passed for meat was both foul-smelling and bitter and full of poison, so that many a person died as the result of eating it.

People nevertheless tried to dress it, clean it and salt it as best they knew how or could afford to.

*Cattle suffered from the same scourge. Large growths appeared on their jaws and shoulders, the legs of some split in two, others sprouted growths, alternating from one side to the other, which both hands could hardly encompass. The same was true of hips and other joints, they were disfigured, grew together and became immovable. Their tail ends fell off, sometimes half, sometimes less. Hooves fell off, some split apart in the middle. Ribs became disfigured or grew together all along the sides and fell apart in the middle, as they could not bear the weight of the animal when it had to lay on its side. The animal's hair fell off in patches, the inner parts were soft and flabby.*

A few cows which were not terribly crippled were saved by giving them to drink the same milk which had been drawn from them.

Calves born in this miserable time had fine marrow in their bones, though little bone sponge, even if marrow had been starved from every bone in the mothers.

*Those people who did not have enough older and undiseased supplies of food to last them through these times of pestilence also suffered great pain. Ridges, growths and bristle appeared on their rib joints, ribs, the backs of their hands, their feet, legs and joints. Their bodies became bloated, the insides of their mouths and their gums swelled and cracked, causing excruciating pains and toothaches. Sinews contracted, especially at the back of the knee.*

*The inner functions and organs were affected by feebleness, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, excessive urination and lack of control of those parts. This caused diarrhoea, dysentery, worms and sore growths on necks and thighs, and both young and old were especially plagued by loss of hair.*

Until this time all water, whether flowing in surface streams or from underground sources, had been scarcely drinkable due to its bad flavour and bitter taste in the mouth.

But from now on everyone who was forced to drink it found, and agreed unanimously, that all the water flowing from springs had improved in taste and was even sweet.

It was obvious that this was in fact true: those who were sick or even mortally ill could drink water from springs but not at all the surface water in pools or streams.

##

Lamento II  
*Disorientated*

The immoderate killing of the birds  
by certain ruffians  
drove the birds to nest elsewhere.

It would make for too long a tale to try and describe the flight of farm families back and forth. One sought refuge on a farm which another had only just deserted, as everyone was desperate.

Some of them met their fates in the rivers,  
the ocean,  
the fire,  
or in the barren sands  
an impassable places.

The excellent trout fishing, which was often to be had here in the rivers also came to an end when the waters decreased.

Meadows have been turned into barren and sandy lands; many of the other haylands became sandy wastes after the river disappeared.

A fine island of sedgegrass, which belonged to the cloister, was choked with sand;

a large area of the home field and the buildings of the property are themselves being damaged by the blowing sand.



Those who did stay harvested what hay they could obtaining an amount which could be enough perhaps for one or two cows, but full of sand and so befouled that if it were cast on a fire, the resulting flames were as blue as if sulphur were burnt, and the smell was of sulphur as well.

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When it became clear that fire and water would destroy his farm, he had a large chest, containing various carpentry tools and another smaller locked chest of books taken to a safer place high up on a slope. The chest was later found broken apart, one of its hinges broken, the other pulled out. The smaller chest had been smashed into pieces and the books it contained spread over the ground some distance away. Hay cribs and manure boxes and inch-thick planks were shattered and rent from one end to another. Another chest, containing clothing, wool and brass objects, was also found broken, the wool and clothing rent asunder and scattered, and few of the brass objects were to be found. There was also a small chest containing money and it was found a long way off, still in one piece and unopened.

For the rest of this month, the fire ran out of this side of the canyon, then stopped completely. Goods and sheep were then transported across the new lava.

They had to leave almost all their possessions behind and anything which was not placed in the custody of honest men was ruthlessly consumed or stolen, houses and locked stores broken into, so that it is painful even to think of it.

#

Any fishbones found on the farm  
or half buried in sand on the seashore  
were collected and cleaned,  
boiled and crushed  
in a little milk  
and eaten as nourishment.

Some people took hay,  
which they cut finely  
and mixed with meal  
to make porridge or bread.  
Some began to eat horsemeat;  
most of them died.  
Others would rather die than eat it.

When spring came and plants began to sprout, roots were dug up for food. By far the best and healthiest of them were the caraway roots, plenty of which were found here, and I would say that, with God's help, they saved the lives of numerous people.

Next came silverweed and mountain avens roots, but they were most unhealthy if there was no good milk to accompany them.

Both cinquefoil and dandelion leaves, along with moss champions, wherever they could be found, were chopped finely and used in broth together with chickweed, but the sea sandwort was both healthier and more filling.

Thyme was also used as food wherever it was found.

##

## Lamento III

### *Grave*

In some of the channels the water seethed with the heat.

I had to make the journey across that day to administer the last rites to a man who was mortally ill, and I had a difficult time making the crossing.

I decided to make an attempt to journey eastward, but could not manage to find anyone to accompany me, mostly due to fear, except one lad.

When I reached the river I first sank into quicksand and then had to swim the horse from one bank to the other.

I took all the church possessions that I could manage to carry with me and returned by the common route which was further inland, thinking the water would be shallower there, which proved to be the case. But so much glacial silt and floodwater had collected on those alluvial flats that it took the boy and I from six o'clock one evening until around nine the next morning to cross there, and we were almost overcome by exhaustion and wet to the bone.

After that no one crossed there.

Everyone who was available to help and could make his way to the church lent a hand.

They dug the earth out from under the frozen top layer,  
placed the coffins side by side  
and on top of one another,  
and then placed a good covering of sod  
over these gravesites,

all of which are in the southwest corner of the churchyard. The other areas were unusable because of sand and water.

In this single usable section no one had been buried before because of some whim, and it thus was as if it had been set aside and reserved for this use.

Because of the manner of the snowfall that winter bodies could not be drawn to church, and after midwinter there was not a horse left which was capable of bearing them there, with the exception of one animal which I had purchased in the autumn.

I lent him to bear many bodies, whether I went along or not.

He was an old, stout riding horse who never failed all that winter, no matter how much contaminated hay he ate, as he got a good deal of grazing along with it.

Many a man wondered at his strength and not without cause, but God showed in this as in other things His power and care, by His concern for the bodies of His children.

###

## Part 9

End

As the all-knowing Lord could see that both myself and others were far too poorly prepared to be called up in haste, in His mercy He sent a cure, in the sweet smells which arose from the earth and smothered the foul ones. The home fields emitted an appetising smell of hay, to which the dwarf birch, meadowsweet, wild thyme and each herb added accordingly to its nature, so that anyone who travelled across the barren sands and paid attention to his surroundings noticed the sudden change.

The steam and vapours which rose up from the earth here were so unusual that during the entire summer after the fire broke out,

no rainbow was seen  
whatever direction the sun shone  
on the clouds and falling rain,  
until one day,  
when it appeared for a long time.

However little the rainbow had been valued before, it was now welcomed warmly by many, who in their hour of need gained support from the promise that God would no longer allow either fire or water to destroy the settlement here.

All the mice in this country and the next one to the west, which had often caused great damage to our lyme grass grain and other stores, were killed and there has been no sign of them here since.

In the eastern part of the district no mouse has been seen nor made its presence felt for a long period of time, so they may well have been killed off there in like fashion although there are no tales of such.