

October 11, 991

Nacreous has been lost at sea for the past eight days because of blinding clouds and a severe storm encountered at three weeks hard sail from Ireland. I feel as does all the crew, that we shall never see nor feel a native land.

The stars say we have been blown to a western parallel of our intended destination, Greenland. Besides the hardships of little drinking water and no food, we are endangered by the massive hulks of ice, the first of which was encountered at dawn of this day.

We sail south in hope of finding a new land spoken of by comrades; a land possessed by spraelings. The crew of twenty slaves, acquired from our Irish conquest, and warriors numbered in fifty two; show wrinkles of fatigue, but still show boast in that they survived the great storm, and press on bravely. The Nacreous herself has faired well, discounting a torn sail and a split plank; but nightfall creeps with more to fail.

October 12, 991

Last night the crew got little sleep because of the hunger pains, I included. The night in fact, was a hindrance, for the gathering of memories killed the moral and sharpened the hunger and temper. Few exchange comments, the comments are nasty, three outbreaks occurred by mid-day those over mouthfuls of fish or nips of fresh water. One man in hysteria drank water from the sea; now unconscious, he is mourned. He may serve as an example so others won't be tempted to do the same. However land is still just a hope, and the ice flow has not decreased; the possibility looks dim as far as survival is concerned.

I try to convince the crew we'll see land soon, but that's like trying to sell a field of oats to a sailor. Now the worst, we've hit a calm, the silence will take its toll.

A groan of agony comes with each breath, my warriors with wanton eyes, glare at the slaves, the slaves with eyes of fear glare at the sky; all contemplate death.

Little can be done, just hope which picks and tickles the brain to an endless night-mare. At last a breeze: the eyelids flutter, the men rise as if some mysterious omen has fallen upon them. Then one little man made a gallant roar, "ice flows ahead"

Like brothers, each man held his own, the ice scraped the side of Nacreous; all gave a sigh of relief, then faded into a hunger daze once more.

Now as the sail stretched to it's fullest, eyes peer at me, all expecting a barborous speech, I said the only thing that would bring back the moral to a sailor, "The Nacreous has not failed us, let us not fail her;" With eyes more surprised than willing, each man arose and with volume that would bring fear to a whale, the crew gave a true Viking roar.

Now with the day coming to an end, I as all the rest upon Nacreous look upon tomorrow unwillingly, and have little I have to mend.

October 12, 991

Sleep took the lives of eleven, at least thirty are unconscious and half of that number again have lost the will to live; all have lost hope of finding land. "Nacreous," I cry silently, as one does over a grave.

"Where are the words of wisdom, and where Nacreous is the Viking bravery, surely the courage we loomed behind in battle has not left us now." In these last hours, let my hand talk, spoken words have little bravery.

I wish but cannot write,
Let the seas carry the ashes,
Let the ashes find the shore.

This is the record of
the last days of
the nordic ship
" Nacreous "
her captain,
Christian Jensen,
and the crew
of seventy two.

by
Andy Wood