

The Last Volcano / Det siste utbruddet

A film by Roderick Coover and Scott Rettberg

Some say that what happens once never happens again.

Others say that nothing only happens once. In the summer of my twentieth year, the skies one day grew heavy and ferruginous. The sun filtered through clouds of dust like the face of an angry salamander.

June was hot, very hot for Bergen. We thought it was just a dry summer haze. There had not been very much rain, but the haze did not abate. The coppery clouds hung low and thick, and there they remained in the city surrounded by seven mountains.

Some said it was just the dust rising from the farms in the mountains, the fields allowed to go too dry. The sun is a fiery red disc and we cannot remember a summer so hot or air so stifling.

The air tastes of sulfur and some say that the devil has returned to bring revenge to the ghosts of the witches we have burnt on Nordnes generations ago.

They say that the air is not so bad if you are healthy. The leaves on the trees wither and the grasses in the fields wear a strange sort of dust.

We count the dead all summer.

The sky shows no blue for weeks on end. The air does not clear.

The news from the farms is bad. The animals are dying off and the fields do not yield.

There are reports of lambs falling in the fields like so much rotten fruit, their spittle yellow and foaming, the meat of their flesh loose on the bone.

The young are vomiting blood and the oldest have died.

The ships don't stay in port for long.

They say Bergen is a sick city. Some say that the old gods are waking, displeased with our ignorance.

In the shipping news, we hear that the war in America has ended. In the shipping news, we hear that men in France have raised a "globe aérostatique" into the sky. Very soon, they say, men will travel through the sky like birds flying from limb to limb, from mountain to mountain, nation to nation.

I can imagine this, but it is like a dream to me, floating above these swirling clouds of yellow, greenish orange gas beneath a brightly colored globe to a place where the air is clean.

No ship stays in port for very long and the seafarers eye us suspiciously, as if we carry a contagion that cannot be washed away.

The summer will be hot and the winter will be cold. There is nowhere to go and nothing to be done.

Nothing is certain but that the harvest will be meager and life will be hard.

We know very little, and we carry many coffins.

We will repeat the old stories or we will forget them.

Time, I am sure, will someday stop.

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Others say that nothing only happens once. In the summer of my twentieth year, the skies one day grew heavy and ferruginous. The sun filtered through clouds of dust like the face of an angry salamander.

June was hot, very hot for Bergen.

What is this about, Gro?

We thought it was just a dry summer haze. There had not been very much rain,

—Eh?

but the haze did not abate. The coppery clouds hung low and thick, and there they remained in the city surrounded by seven mountains.

Gro, is this from the 16th century, or 14th century?

Some said it was just the dust rising from the farms in the mountains, the fields allowed to go too dry. The sun is a fiery red disc

—Impossible ...

and we cannot remember a summer so hot or air so stifling.

The air tastes of sulfur and some say that the devil has returned to bring revenge to the ghosts of the witches we have burnt on Nordnes generations ago.

—What is this about?

They say that the air is not so bad if you are healthy. The leaves on the trees wither and the grasses in the fields wear a strange sort of dust.

—Not.

We count the dead all summer.

The sky shows no blue for weeks on end. The air does not clear.

The news from the farms is bad. The animals are dying off and the fields do not yield.

There are reports of lambs falling in the fields like so much rotten fruit, their spittle yellow and foaming, the meat of their flesh loose on the bone.

—Is it a vision of the future?

The young are vomiting blood and the oldest have died.

The ships don't stay in port for long.

They say Bergen is a sick city. Some say that the old gods are waking, displeased with our ignorance.

—Sounds like a legend or something.

In the shipping news, we hear that the war in America has ended. In the shipping news, we hear that men in France have raised a "globe aérostatique" into the sky.

—So it must be the 1700s.

Very soon, they say, men will travel through the sky like birds flying from limb to limb, from mountain to mountain, nation to nation.

—Yes, it's the 1700s.

I can imagine this, but it is like a dream to me, floating above these swirling clouds of yellow, greenish orange gas beneath a brightly colored globe to a place where the air is clean.

No ship stays in port for very long and the seafarers eye us suspiciously, as if we carry a contagion that cannot be washed away.

The summer will be hot and the winter will be cold. There is nowhere to go and nothing to be done.

—*Can you tell me what this is about, Gro?*

Nothing is certain but that the harvest will be meager and life will be hard.

We know very little, and we carry many coffins.

—*Gro? Gro?*

We will repeat the old stories or we will forget them.

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