

① Make a picture in your mind of the cedar canoe atop a sharp white
ridge of ocean. Carried up and up by the water's determined sweep
at the sky, the high-nosed ~~tan~~ ^{poised and} craft, buoyant as a seabird, at last
sleds across the curled crest of wave and begins to glide the surf
toward the dark frame of your scene, a shore of black spruce forest.
Aristazabal Island, this particular landfall is inscribed on modern
charts of the long, crumbled coastline south from the Gulf of Alaska,
three of the four but ~~the~~ ^{here} voyagers bobbing to its shore ~~here~~ in late January of the
year 1853 know nothing of this name, nor would it matter to them
if they did.

④ Now the canoeman as they alight. Karlsson and Melander and Wennberg
and Braaf. ~~For~~ nineteen days they have been together in the slender
canoe, dodging from one of this coast's constant humps of forest-and-

✓

The everlasting bicker of waves trying to arrange sand.

(Greenland)
(Bancroft quote), as the magisterial Bancroft has told us. Every
Russian governor of ~~NA~~ NA must have given thanks that the power was
not extended...

The Russian symbol was the double-headed eagle, ~~and the~~ and it
might have signified the two minds toward Russian America...

--fur seals on handful of islands

Bering story

Now ~~thence~~ they were alongside a rock shore where the tide
had marked a straight dark line, like a step: below it the channel,
just up from it the thronged trees, looking about to descend, as
bathers into the Ganges.

Written 3-6-81

Perhaps it is the colors of the water, tinting mood into the
surf's that steady
onlooking eye, or the susurrations, ~~and surf, its constant~~ low report

of origins a third of the world away. ✓ Whatever, something of the

Pacific touches out, and the people of this shore put their backs

to the rest of the continent and go about thinking that they alone

know the ^{terms} ~~rules~~ of life.

Could it be the ocean's quench of the sun each evening, and the
resurrection next morning?

up out
y.
front

Their paddling had slowed and sometimes faltered now, like the
wingbeats of a wearied bird.

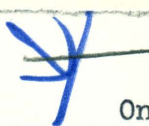
✓

A land, then, entirely ruffled and agitated, and the Pacific meeting it in vast flat calm. But here was pretense again, as a longer look from upward would show. The whiteness surrounding every rock and island like a collar: so steady was the surf turmoil that the islands and rocks appeared as if they had all been dropped just at that instant, the whiteness all around them frozen into that moment of splash.

The forest darkness had a weight to it, a cling, as if it were
a pelt.

Karlsson looked up from the map to the land ahead, ~~remembered~~ reviewed in his mind Melander's sketched geography in the New Archangel dirt, and said, off-handed as he could make it: "To the right. West."

#



On the next of the Tebenkov maps--had Karlsson ^{possessed that} ~~had~~ next map--

Vancouver Island lay angled across most of the page like a long and plump oyster shell. Blunt at each end, 000 miles in its northwest-southeast length and generally 00 wide, rough-edged with inlets and bays, V_ancouver dominates its end of the British Columbia coastline.

as well as geographical.

Its primacy is historical. Midway down Vancouver's western shore on the Tebenkov map, a particularly large and rough nick showed, ^{with} ~~the~~

^{reading Hymka:} the cyrillic script beside it ~~reads~~ Nootka, the sound where, ^{the}

before the world properly knew anything of the Pacific Northwest,

European ~~frontiersmen~~ empire-makers entangled like mountaineering parties clambering in from all sides of the same precipice.

world
known

before
properly
any thing
of
NW

written 3-5-81

any

~~any~~

~~This~~ sunlight was bullion to them, ~~the~~ absence of storm a ~~wealth~~

welcome

of distance able to be achieved. Prosperity of the most needed sort.

For with Melander gone they needed, O God and Jesu and all the holy

beards within the twelve-gated walls of Jerusalem, they needed every

glint of aid now.

as W
ud have
said
it

10-2-81

✓
REVISED

The mountains no longer lifted directly out ^{from} ~~of~~ the water, but
clustered ^{some} ~~a~~ discreet ~~distance~~ miles inland.

~~REVISED~~

REVISED

Which is not to say he never knew worry. Particularly now,
with Melander gone. In every distance of Karlsson's mind hung one
~~bother~~
~~shadow~~ or another.

Aloud, Karlsson asked Braaf to scavenge more ~~firewood~~ wood for

the breakfast fire. He had the water for tea ready by the time Braaf

~~returned~~ ^{was back} and Wennberg ~~returned~~ ^{sailcloth} from stowing the ~~canvas~~ and blankets

in the canoe.

Heard more surf, more silence, the silence there had been
as he stood numbed by the sentry's ^{query} ~~call~~ in the New Archangel night. . .

"You both know the where of it. Back aboard the steamship, ^{where}
Melander judged it could stay."

Wennberg stood, fast as such heft could. "Then you don't know
fuck-all about where we are, do you? You're running us blind down
this coast!"

"I know Astoria is ahead. That is enough. Wennberg, I can't
have maps when there aren't maps. Melander reckoned we could make
our way after the maps gave out, and that's what we're doing."

"Melander was so clever he jiggered his way in front of a bullet."

"Not the first who did that. Or the last, either." The voice
was Braaf's, from across the fire. One of the muskets had found its
way into balance across the tops of his thighs. His hands rested
atop it as if he were waiting to be invited to play a tune.

"'Anywhere you go, you get nearer death.' Melander said that once,
and he was right. ~~Depends on how~~ Don't you think so, Wennberg?"

A smithing kind of imperialism, the Tsar's.

~~RECEIVED~~

written 3-9-81

REVISED

Wennberg looked off fixedly into the forest. "I abandoned God.

This is his punishment on me. (quote from Job?)..."

"Wennberg, listen: your dealings with God are one matter.

Keeping alive is another. You don't have God on the other paddle

of this canoe, you just have me. We have got to work together.

Either one of us alone, this coast will kill."

3-3-81 ✓

Clouds lopped the mountains, so that they seemed strange green
buttes of timber which angled up and suddenly dissolved from sight.

✓

W: the down-the-nose attitude of the longtimer over the newcomer.

✓

By now, the paddling had begun to tell on them.

✓

Now they answered for the late start, the tide resisting their
labor.

✓

Sly fingers of the ocean versus the knuckled mountains of the
continent.

✓

Putty weather, gray and changeable.

✓

Men and women are hard ore. We do not change composition in
a moment's fire.

✓

Surf expelled up the beach, drained back: the ocean's breathing
in and out...

✓

The ocean became a part of their day, like walls to a ~~dweller~~
householder.

~~REVISED~~

It may be wondered, diffident as Karlsson generally seemed,
quiet as his manner was, whether he had the capability called "edge."
The biting surface to put against life. Did he want sufficiently,
and could he apply himself, at whatever angles were necessary, to
fulfill that wanting? It is all very well to go about life
unobtrusively--^{some of those} it could be recommended to most of us--but what of
when life begins to go about us? There is where "edge" tells.
You surrender or, just as bad, retreat--or you work your own
salients, make them thrust here, hold there.

manhood

*Along
Verr's
wild edge,
he proved.*

"Oh, aye, and God send wine and figs, **too.**"

"No, hear it. It's worth the try, Melander. If try wasn't in

at
us, we'd still be squatting ~~in~~ New Archangel."

The morning after the canoe party ambled back to Masset was
In full Anglo-American amity by now,
the Fourth of July. We intended firing a salute from an old cannon

belonging to the Indians which was formerly mounted on the bastion at

Fort Simpson, but on examination it proved too rusty and we were afraid

to test it. Swan instead promenaded the beach and *was rewarded with the find of*
~~came across a~~

dead porpoise.

water where the marine mollusks are very useful in cleaning off the

flesh and leaving the bones white and nice....

not (When the Russians occupied Sitka, one of the surgeons adopted

this method of cleaning skeletons which was found very effective.

The specimen was placed on the beach at low tide and covered with a

mat or an old gunny sack, on the corners of which stones were placed

to prevent it floating off, and in a short time the myriads of sand

fleas would clean it perfectly.

The sand fleas could just as well have taken their time with

the porpoise cranium, because still there was no sign of *Swan's* ~~Edinso~~ and

day upon day his canoe men. Swan paced the Masset shoreline *The site* ~~some more.~~ ~~It~~ had

its beguilements.

These stretches of water put uneasiness into the canoemen.

with the surf and rocks along the eastern shore,
Out on these, the ocean had them like minnows in a bucket.

The dream had come to Karlsson again, stranger than ever because his eyes seemed to be open part of the time. The carved columns advanced on him in those moments of seeing. Double-faced, wearing a long visage nodding at him and a smaller one atop, a mossy mask.

The tower broke, the mossy demon drifted free of the longer one and came closer and closer. Karlsson reached across to Wennberg to tell him of this, but voice too seemed to be outside, around him.

"They're both alive, but not much more," the brown-bearded American settler called to his son. "Shipwrecked, likely." "Bring the horses close, Johnny. We'll need to tote this pair to get them to Astoria."

mask of moss

long-faced

shipwrecked.

2d rider

Jason

thick →
non-fal ↓

This was a new style of coast to any they had seen yet. They
were up on a rock shelf the height of a ^{quay,} ~~dock,~~ a few hundred yards
wide and twice or more long. Green in places with moss, mostly brown
with bulb seaweed, this surprising plateau was thinly sheeted with
water, like puddles after rain; evidently high tide ^{swept} ~~came~~ in to cover
the bench, for waves even now tried to reach over the seaward edge.

Out of this shelf, in front of them, ^{men} thrust a tusk of rock,
four, five times the height of a man. Karlsson pointed beyond the
tusk toward the ocean: the lighter gray there was the seals.

The men crept to the south side of the tusk; on its north ~~side~~ lay
tidal trough, a sharp-sided trench which brought in a foaming surge
of water from the ocean 00 further out.

The shot to the seals would be almost a hundred ^{paces} ~~yards~~. Karlsson
disliked the distance, but tried to amend for it to the extent he could
by singling out the inmost seal, a yearling male off by himself.

It is
first known to have been told to the English captain, Meares, when he
arrived into the North Pacific on the scent of furs in 1788, and like
all good horrors it held a core of truth. On ceremonial occasions,
one or another tribal chief might employ a bag of skulls to show his
strength of heart. Not a society of polite tinkering of teacups, this.
If the four interloping Swedes had luck, they would not encounter the
populated coves where the rain season was being whiled away in per-
formance and potlatch.

In our fathers' time a man ^{set out to} catalogue the wind names of the world. (Murchie, 130+: use this to introduce williwaw?)

names of
wind
and
world

"...The dry khamsin of Egypt, reputed to blow sand unceasingly for fifty days; the westerly datoo of the Straits of Gibraltar; the misty waimea of Hawaii; the cool pontias ^{from} of the Rhone gorges; the chinook of the dry American plains"--sixth on his poetic roster, the williwaw of Alaska's offshore waters. An abrupt squall...

Do I? Do I say in the morning, Braaf, Wennberg, a mite of
oversight here, we ^{haven't} ~~don't~~ have the maps we need? ^{Here on,} ~~We'll~~ just sail
blind and see what happens?...Melander

is over there under rocks. Why him? Him, HIM? All this was in his
head, he had some scheme to jolly us along without maps, and now it's
gone, leaked out the back of his head...All right. All right. We
are still three, we are strong enough, we have a chance. ~~But~~ why
Melander? Kill one of ^{us} like ^{rocks} ~~birds~~ on a fence, why ^{not} ~~wasn't it~~ Wennberg?

Wennberg broke that canoe for us, Wennberg must have earned life with
that. Braaf, then. ^{But} Braaf is no target, Braaf ~~is~~ knows how to survive
the way a ^{fox} ~~crow~~ know to ^{hide} ~~fly~~... Sleep, ^{must sleep.} How can the pair of bastards
sleep? I need to, too...

Melander's course out of the harbor was straight toward the ocean, then the veer south, to bring them along the shoreline of Baranof Island. The men's legs were wet to their knees from launching the canoe, and in the winter night it took the first half hour of paddling to warm themselves entirely.

They could read the coastline by the surf sound and its moving margin of lightness as it struck and swashed. The night was calm, which they needed. The timbered spine of Baranof Island made a high eastern horizon; to their right, the ocean side, night of a single nullness. They stroked steadily rather than rapidly; not even Wennberg was impatient about this, for they knew these first hours were vital, that they had to pull themselves as far from Sitka as possible by dawn. 0 strokes of the paddle each minute, four men paddling, 0 hours from the time they eased away from Sitka to daylight: some 0000 of these exertions, as if the canoe had begun a pulse like a living thing, and they could find a cove and hide.

reg ce in
canoe,
thought
them y
M, who
as even
had his
reasons.
K. W.
B. M.

insert pp. 49-55

The blackness^{lightning,} was intense, of a sort our eyes have been weaned ^{fuzzy,} from by generations of streetlamps. Starless, so much so that ^{all} it seemed nothing ever had kindled in that void. Vast, alarmingly ^{quenched} vast; the next streetlamp was unknown thousands of miles over the Pacific, if indeed the residents of Japan lit their avenues. It bound the eyes, a cosmic kerchief

The dark was an ocean over them, as well as the one beside them.

As well as the ocean beside them they had one over them, and it was the darkness.

flame of
match?

add an
adjective.

Beyond the mountains, in every direction except west, there was nothing
but more mountains. West, there was ocean and more ocean.

two us.
reigning
policy &
coast,
everything
might be
impossible
to leave
world.

^{of} Their war canoes were ^{as} a sea cavalry, long-headed ~~fast~~ fast craft

which romped in on the shore villages of their foes.

It flatters the Russian imperial effort in Alaska to call it

an *Ursus Major*, ~~of~~ a great bear

91?

"A strong right arm is the lever of life," Melander had heard one
of the ~~Ru~~ Sitka officials ^{declare} say. In part this style of administration
was due to the frontier population which had to be administered, for
Alaska was manned by those who had first followed the tilt of their
souls
~~morals~~ all the way across Siberia--to Okhotsk, the ^{mostly} port there--and
were swept on ^{these Okhotskans} then on to Alaska. Many of ~~them~~ came with a thirst and appetite for
depravity which appalled even the Russian officials ^{who recruited them} and the work
force at places such as Sitka had been leavened with Finns, OO, and
Swedes, lured by...

Whose Terms
of indentment

hawking

Melander
7th
world

The system evolved for Russian America ^{then} was crude and relied on
Russian stubbornness and capacity for overwork; but by the time Melander
arrived ^{to be} at cross-purposes with it, it had functioned for 000 years, and
would go on until 1867, when Alaska was ceded to the US for....

Empire
like fams,

Men are hard ore

as if
out
having
lost
interest

So Melander did not rise at Sitka. He stayed carefully level,
like a sea otter bobbing among offshore rocks, and ^{not} ~~what began~~ to work
in his thoughts ^{on} ~~was this~~ the idea of escape, the details of tricking
the Russians, and the question, the pivot question, of who could be
got to go with him.

Behind
his
long hair
tall

Genesis 29, p. 31--

to earn the bliss of
Jacob served seven years ~~for~~ Rachel, the elder daughter of Laban the
Haranite (?). When Laban presented him instead the unfavored daughter
Leah, Jacob became the first known seven-year man to ponder his contract.

Living is a blood sport, and fatal, always fatal.

accomodate to the tribe's narrowed future. (Across the world in Australia, a colonial governor once contrived the euphemism for such horrific impact as the Haidas had been undergoing: "the natural progress of the aboriginal race towards extinction"

used
4-23-81

The sky opened entirely one morning, cloudless as if curtains had been taken down. After the days of hovering cloud the breadth of existence was astounding. Some entire new commodious corner of the planet here was presented to them.

insert for pp. 7-8

M now was up at level-gaze with B's Castle, massive on its hump of stone: a great box strapped atop a tortoise. The habitations and work-buildings of New Archangel sat in the bowl between: barracks, shipyard...(hip roofs?--slanting all four directions) New Archangel was a triply-walled enclave, a threefold Jerico: the stockade ~~xx~~ where M stood, the tremendous height of the mountains, and last, worst, the distances to anywhere else of the world.

insert

Braaf was a slow awakener, the sort who resisted getting up, dreaded to start a day. Even with breakfast in him, he would stumble to the canoe still more asleep than not. "I know what Valhalla is now," he said once. "It's where I never again ^{hear} ~~have~~ Melander say, 'Tumble up.'"

The sky was silver with various ages of tarnish on it. The most ancient, back to 00, lay to their west...

The brightest portion was letting down white sheets, very possibly snow, to the north of them. "Stay there and frost the Russians' ^{ass}" Melander ~~had~~ directed the storm with a push of his hands...

A storm is an affront to the steadiness we think we have achieved
as a species. When whirl becomes king,

Melander in his memory was back aboard the third ship he had ever served on, the Odin. A North Sea lugger, the vessel smelled of OO and OO, had a low foc's'l which kept Melander hunched for the entire voyage, and in heavy sea took in water like a thirsty puppy. ("Adam was the oakum-boy on this one," Melander once muttered as yet another seam ^{below-decks} to began ~~its~~ drizzle.) Young deckhand Melander was on wheel watch when...

(series of wheel commands from captain, interspersing descriptions of ship's behavior against heavy seas...)

Steadily there would be shore to their left, as if the line of islands were marching into the ocean to meet them.

It can be seen

required

curious

new
sentence

You have discerned that this Melander had capability brimming in him. The surprise is the rapidity also at wait within his lanky frame. It would have taken the most earnest watching of him, across the next number of days, to notice change: one or two fewer Melanderesque forays of language, some sorting glances toward his fellow seven-year men as they performed their tasks. Yet in no more than a pair of weeks, Melander sifted through his plan down to details the size of fish-hooks, and was ready now to take up the question--question? not word enough for so life-pivoting a decision--of who could be got to flee New Archangel with him and challenge a thousand miles of wilderness

full

1

black

cut

coiled;
seared;
inner
works
1 a watch

add
short
sentence

gm 1
other:
of who

In the streams which cut this shoreline, a fist-sized bird called the water ouzel was common. The ouzel could walk the bottom of the streams, busily feeding as the flow of stream ~~pushed~~ pinned it into place beneath the riffles. The canoeists had become something like this hydraulic delver, the pressures of... (see London Times clip in Swedes file)

written 3-5-81

Charon
inset
Arishana

For the next hour, Karlsson and Wennberg and Braaf labored as Stygian boatmen, Melander's body a cargo which affected not only the canoe but their lives ahead. When they came ashore at the next island, ~~Karlsson~~ they stood for a time looking at the folded-forward dead man, still not wanting to believe ~~the~~ the death. Wennberg

The sky opened this morning,

cloudless as if curtains had been drawn back. The breadth before the canoe men, after the days of hovering cloud, was astounding, seemed some entire new commodious corner of the planet just unveiled.

written 3-2-81

Do I? Do I say in the morning: Braaf, Wennberg, a bit of oversight here, we don't have the maps we need? So instead we'll just sail blind and see what happens... Jesus and Judas and the other eleven. Melander

Italic

The ~~weather~~ clear weather held, as if curious to see how these three would fare. Karlsson's pencil mark on the maps wove them down

read

Dixon Entrance is one of dozens of plains of water between the broken lands of the northern Pacific coastline, yet, like the others, is individual in its perils. (quote 1st white descptn) Fog ^{spends} ~~takes~~ its season in summer, gales from early autumn until April. Learmonth Bank lie amid its ~~xxx~~ opening to the ocean. Its currents are capricious and strong. The flood tide into Hecate Strait can be as rapid as a man can walk.

Coast Pilot, 40~~mi~~: Between Cape Chacon and and...Cape Fox, the tidal currents are much confused. In bad weather the heavy and confused sea sometimes looks like breakers.

Dixon takes a roiling energy from the geography around it. (above)
It might suck a gale to itself from Portland Inlet, or expel one to OO.
Islands lie at its eastern end like ships seeking a lee anchorage.

Not a unit
None of this showed on Melander's map, which was a straightforward
^{calm as a}
^{mobile} ~~outline~~ ^{between} outlining of shoreline, no notations of currents and foibles.

The sea-reach seemed total now, around them nothing that gave
promise of anything but ocean and its ^{gray}anger.

parted together 3-2-81

These ^{vivid} ~~dramatic~~ people had met the white newcomers to the coast in baffling episodes. When the OO stepped aboard OO's ship, it was

not anything of worth the white sailors wanted, but the fur clothing the triesmen wore. When the OO swarmed over Astor's ship Tonquin and a crewman tossed fire into the powder magazine, whites and natives shared went to their various netherworlds in a single blast.

Then there was that tale of the pillow of skulls.

^{It} ~~That tale~~ first had been told to the English captain, Meares, in 1788 (?) when he arrived into the North Pacific to undertake a fur trade, and like all good horrors, it ^{held} ~~had~~ a core of truth. On ceremonial occasions, a OO chief indeed would employ a bag of skulls to show his strength of heart. Not a society of polite tinkering of teacups, this. Yet there was extraordinary refinement to this coastal country.

pasted together 3-2-81

Until now, For all that Melander and company could tell in their island-

by-island descent of the great precipice of shoreline, not another human
~~might have existed along this shore.~~
being ~~had ever come the route.~~ In actuality, their journey was more

Taken
to
truth,

like the course a stroller might take through sleeping neighborhoods.

There were perhaps as many as sixty thousand residents of this coast,
in tribal clusters of astounding culture--Tlingits, Haidas, Tsimshians,
Bellabellas, Bella Coolas, Kwakiutls, Nootkas.

The native tribes had learned to find luxury at this overlap
of worlds,

~~The life of the coast was~~ ^{asks to be called} sumptuous. In spawning time, salmon

stippled the streams: veins of protein come into the water, to be
casually wrested, ~~fileted~~ fileted, dried for the winter larder. The
wealth above water was cedar. The coastal people had learned how to
release the cunning within this wood: it built lodges, canoes, and
art.

All through this coastal culture, ^{flashed.} was drama. The tribal people
danced the stories of the forest creatures, sang and recited them,
carved them into the tree-size columns. Art such as the planet

rock to the next. Each man of them has been afraid many times in

those days, brave almost as often. Here at Aristazabal they land wetly,

slim but laden
~~parade~~
heft their yark across the gravel beach into hiding within the salal

salmonberry,
and swordferns, then turn away to the abrupt timber. As the trees

sieve them from sight, another white wave replaces the rolling hill

of water by which the four were borne to this shore where they are

selecting their night's shelter, And where one of them is to die.

New Archangel

Their escape from Sitka had been Melander's plan. Melander maybe, (2)

under different policy, would have earned his way up the ranks of

the Russian-American Company there like a lithe boy up a schooner's rigging;

promyshlennik, harvester of pelts,
become a valued apparatchik of the Tsar's Alaskan enterprise in the

manner, let us say, that elsewhere along the fur frontiers of north-

most North America occasional young Scotsmen of promise were let to

fashion themselves into field captains of the Hudson's Bay Company

by learning to lead brigades of trappers and traders, keep the native

tribes cowed or in collaboration, deliver a reliable 15 per cent ?

~~of profit~~
 profit season upon season to London and, not incidentally, to hold
 those far spans of map not only in the name of their corporate
 employers but for the British crown which underlay the company's
 charter terms like a ~~particularly~~ ^{an} ornate watermark. But maybe is

only maybe, and the facts enough are that on the broad map of
 midnineteenth-century empires Alaska lies apart from the Hudson's Bay
 span of dominion across most of what has come to be Canada; is indeed
 a great crude crown of ^{northwestmost} territory tipped sharply, as if in deliberate
 spurn, away from London ~~and in~~ ^{into} the direction of Siberia and Moscow;
 and that Melander held contempt for the life he and the other Swedes
 found themselves in as seven-year men ^{in Alaska} ~~there~~ ^{laborers} ~~indentured workers~~

of the Russian-American Company ^{is fur-gathering enterprise,} in the Tsar's particular system of
 empire-by-proxy. "The Russians' oxen," as Melander more than once
 grumbled it.

41 You would have spied Melander at once in any day's comings and goings

at the frontier port ^{of} ~~called~~ New Archangel. ~~(Called so, that is, until~~
~~Alaska passed from Russian hands to American in 1867 and the settlement~~
~~was rechristened to what the coast's natives knew it as, Sitka.) Tall~~

Tall man with lanks of arms and

high hips, so that he seemed to be all long sections and hinges. Even
 his manner of talking was prominently jointed into lengths, ~~this way,~~

~~every so often ending a sentence with a querulous~~
 a habit he had of ~~ending frequent sentences with "aye?"~~ as if

affirming to his listener whether he really dared continue with ~~the~~ ^{so}

mesmerizing ^a line of conversation. Needless to say of such a quiz,

~~thirty~~ ^{- one} times out of thirty Melander could be counted on, ~~with no~~ ^{all the reluctance}

~~born of politeness notwithstanding,~~
~~further discernible reluctance,~~ to continue. Fortunately Melander

was well worth sustained attention. His line of jaw ran lengthy,

~~as~~ did his forehead, but his bright blue eyes and stub nose and short mouth

were closely set, a sudden alert center of face amid the jaw-and-

forehead expanse as if ~~peering willy out the hole~~ ^{in wily surprise} ~~trunk~~ ^{of a tree} at you,

and whatever Melander's tongue dealt with at any given opportunity,

~~ayed and roundabout~~ ^{and chaff-strewn} though the route might be, ended up with more

weight per word to it than most men's mouthings.

¶ Although born on the isle of Gotland and thinking of himself as a
 Swede, Melander actually numbered in the landless nationality, that
 of the sea. On Gotland his people had been fisher-folk beyond memory,
 generation upon generation automatically capable with herring nets as

5
if born with hands shaped only for that task, and it had been ~~an~~

~~startling~~
~~astounding~~ flex of independence when Melander, himself beginning to

resemble a sizable height of pine spar, went off from ~~the~~ ^{his} village of

Slite to tall-masted vessels. He ~~was~~ ^{Proved} apt aboard ship, this ~~man~~ ^{young} Gotlander

alert eyes and adroit tongue, and in a dozen years of sailing
the Baltic and the ~~North~~ ^{North} Atlantic seaboard of Europe

bettered his position voyage by voyage. It was as first mate of a schooner bringing twenty fresh seven-year men from Stockholm in the spring of 1851 that Melander arrived to Alaska. Specifically, to the shoreside assemblage of hewn logs and Russian tenacity called New Archangel. (Called so, that is, until Alaska passed from Russian hands to American by sale in 1867 and the settlement was rechristened to what the coast's natives knew it as, Sitka.) Once,

~~eleven~~
~~eight~~ ^{unexpectedly} there, a pair of matters ~~decided~~ ^{decided} him to stay. The prospect of an ~~eight~~ ^{schooner's} month return voyage under the ~~brig's~~ ^{captain}, a fidgety little

~~Firm~~
circle-faced ~~Danziger~~ ^{Firm} who was veteran in the Baltic trade but quite

literally out of his depth on the ocean; and the sight of the steamship

~~Emperor Nicholas~~ ^{\$} ~~I~~ ^{endless} berthed against the backdrop of ~~broad~~ ^{endless} Alaskan forest.

~~Far~~ ^{usual} from having a wind sailor's ~~contempt~~ ^{usual} for steam vessels, Melander

was more than a little intrigued with the contraptions. ~~Setting~~ ^{Pointing} a course and achieving it by sheer power of mechanism, ~~this~~ ^{this} was just the sort of thing to appeal to him. In an earlier ~~time~~ ^{time} and place, Melander would have been the man you wanted to set a spire on a cathedral; in a later, to oversee a fleet of mail planes. But on

an April day in 1851, at one of the rim-ends of the known world, what was at hand was this squatty wonder of self-propulsion and a proclaimed shortage of gifted seamen. "If the wind were clever enough,"

Melander told the baffled ~~Danzig~~ ^{Finnish skipper} captain upon taking leave of him,

"it would snuff out these steam-snorters before they get a start.

Aye?"

4 As will happen, Melander after signing on with the Russian-American

Company did find his life veered by the ~~attractive~~ ^{alluring} new machinery, ^{right enough,} but

not as hoped. The Russians seldom fired up the ~~steamship~~ ^{Nicholas}, which was

of a vintage requiring approximately two days of chopping by the wood

crew to feed the boilers for each day of voyage--a visiting Hudson's

Bay officer once amended the name of the vessel to Old Nick, on the

ground that it consumed fuel at about the ~~same~~ ^{might} rate you'd expect of

Hell--and on the occasions when its paddlewheels were set into

ponderous thwacking motion, positions aboard were snatched by bored

officers of the ~~Russian~~ ^{small} navy contingent stationed at ~~Sitka~~ ^{New Archangel}. In his

first Alaskan year Melander steamed out with the ~~Emperor~~ ^{governor} Nicholas ~~I~~

only when Rosenberg, the Russian ~~official in command~~ ^{governor} of New Archangel, ~~took~~ ^{took} ~~take~~ ^{his official retinue on} would make an outing to the hot spring at an outpost called Ozherskoi,

a little distance south along the coast from Sitka ~~harbor~~ ^{Sound}. ~~That~~ ^{This}

happened precisely twice, and Melander's sea-time ~~total~~ ^{-under-steam} totaled six days.

The rest of the ~~time~~ ^{workspan}, because of his ~~experience~~ ^{ability} of handling men and,

from his time on Baltic voyages, his tongue's capability with Russian

as well as Swedish and Finnish, and his Gotland knowledge of fish, ~~he~~ ^{Melander}

was put in charge of the salting of catches of herring and halibut

New Archangel's

~~thought of~~ ^{nominated into the escape} at once. # Karlsson was slender and withdrawn, (3)

with a narrow bland face like that of a village parson, ~~but Melander~~

The sort of man ~~without~~ ^{not} much to say, nor of whom much was said.

But Melander one time had noticed him canoeing back from a day's hunting--Karlsson was one of the few New Archangel Swedes occasionally sent out to hunt game to help provision the port; ordinarily, he ~~was~~ ^{worked as} an axman in the wood-cutting crew--by skimming across Sitka ~~Bay~~ ^{Sound} with steady

stopless strokes. Watching him, Melander had been put in mind of the regularity of a millwheel.

One other impression of interesting constancy about Karlsson Melander also had stored away, ~~the~~ ^{the} observation that the slender untalkative man visited more often to the women

~~women in the huts outside the fort~~ ^{native village outside the stockade wall} than did any of the merchants of wind who perpetually bragged in the barracks about their lust.

What brought down Melander's decision in favor of Karlsson, however, was a tinier thing, ~~an~~ ^{feather of} instant remembered from shipboard. Karlsson

had come to Alaska on the same ~~brig~~ ^{schooner} as Melander, and Melander recalled

that just before sailing, when others of the indentured group, ^{the} torque of the journey-to-come tremendous in them at the moment, ^{talked} large of the certain success ahead, the excitement the ^{frontier life} ~~fur hunting~~ would furnish and how rapidly and with what staggering profit their ^{with the Russians,} seven years of contract would pass, Karlsson listened, gave a small mirthless smile and a single shake of his head, and moved off along the deck by himself. Whatever propelled Karlsson to ^{Alaska} ~~Sitka~~, it had not been self-delusion.

Melander chose a rainless ^{late-June} ~~day~~ morning, ^{gray-silver} ~~the~~ gentle overcast cupping the day's light downward to lend ~~sharp~~ clarity to the harbor's islands of black spruce and the sudden mountains behind the settlement, the usual morning wind off the bay lazed to a breeze, to approach Karlsson before work-call. If Karlsson would consider escape on the best of New Archangel's days, Melander thought, he was truly ready. "Let's take our tea outside the stockade. Flavor always improves away from the Russians."

Tin mugs in hand, the two of them strolled past the sentry at the stockade gate and went a short way into the native village which ^{extended in a long single-file of dwellings} ~~straggled north~~ along the shoreline. As they stood and sipped, a dozen natives emerged from one of the nearest longhouses, men and women together and all naked, and ^{waded} ~~walked~~ casually into ~~the water of~~ the bay to bathe. ~~If Karlsson,~~

4 "Those canoes are longer than they look, aye?" Melander began,

motioning to the natives' cedar shells in a row on the beach before

"We could step into one here and step out at Stockholm."

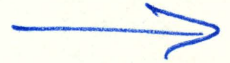
Karlsson's face, all at once not quite so bland, suggested the standard skepticism toward talk of uncooping oneself from New Archangel.

? more:
Because of New Archangel's isolation ^{far into the North Pacific} ~~by ocean~~ and because muskeg and

sinkholes and an alpine forest so thick it seemed to be thatched began

just beyond the stockade walls, the matter of escape always narrowed ^{instantly} ~~X~~

^{the same}
to ~~a~~ single fine point: where, except up to heaven, was there to go?



¶ Quickly Melander recited to Karlsson the main frame of ^{his} ~~the~~ plan, that

if they ^{selected} ~~chose~~ their time well and escaped by night they could work

a canoe ~~their way~~ south along the coast, that beyond the Russian territory and that of the Hudson's Bay Company

the Americans had a fur-trading post at Astoria, from there ships

would come and go, ships to ports of Europe; to, at last, Stockholm.

¶ Karlsson at once put questions to Melander about the canoe route.

¶ drained his mug in a final gulp,
Melander folded himself down to rest one knee on the dirt and with
a stick began to diagram.

¶ A first south-pointing stab of island--Baranof, on the oceanward
side of which they squatted now--like a broad knife blade.

¶ A scatter of much smaller islands, then the large Queen Charlottes
group, south-pointing too, like the sheath Baranof had been pulled
from.

¶ Another broken isle-chain of coast, then ^{blunt} the long slant of ~~long~~ Vancouver Island.

¶ At last, the fourth and biggest solidity in the succession Melander
was drawing, the American coastline leading to the Columbia River,
and Astoria.