

Listening to darkness

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**North. North by east. North-north-east. Northeast by north. Northeast. Northeast by east. East-north-east. East by north. East.**

*Bright weather. Dark weather. Gentle weather. Good weather. Slow weather. Soft weather. Wise weather. Clean weather. Dry weather. Rain weather. Wet weather.*

This, uhm, is a compass.

**Northeast by east. East-northeast. East by north. East.**

It's actually is brand new because I left the other one under drift wood north at Strandir, Iceland.

**Southeast. South by east. South.**

*Foul weather, stormy weather, violent weather, strong weather, burning weather, bad weather, rough weather.*

This is a Silva compass. Really fancy. It even has a level, look. This red arrow. If you put the compass on a hill then it tells you how steep the hill is. It's like a bonus.

**West. West by North. West-north-west. Northwest by west. Northwest.**

The aim is to know the landscape well enough so you don't have to use this kind of technique. It is best to be able to wander around in the wild, travelling from one place to another, only depending on your knowledge of the landscape. You've studied the landscape. You've been there before. You've let the landscape lead you, as we say...

***From here, from there and everywhere. Inwards and outwards, backwards and forwards. From the outside, from the inside...***

**We are always thinking about the same things. About where we are in the world.**

*Foul weather, stormy weather, violent weather.*

You can also open your ears and eyes, then you can sense everything around you. Then you can sense all the sounds in the nature. Because the sound of the wind, for example, it changes, depending on where it blows.

And if you know your path's surroundings well enough, then the wind can tell you where you're at because you can detect it from the sound of the wind. You've reached the landmarks where the wind starts to blow differently.

*People prepared their houses as well as they could. Sealed all windows, cracks and holes with mud, dung and flat stones.*

One of my favorite stories was the one about the man who was traveling in the Mývatn wilderness, they needed to go eastward, to Grímsstaðir. They lost the line of cairns, which is very dense in the Mývatn wilderness. The snowstorm was very dark. They knew that one member of the group was more familiar with the landscape than the others and they asked him to lead the group through the snowstorm. He refused at first but accepted in the end, he said that he would have to walk a bit ahead of the group, they would see him but weren't allowed to talk to him because he needed to concentrate. Then he removed his cap so he could hear the sounds of the snowstorm, he knew how the sounds would change as they would go further east.

*Foul weather, stormy weather, violent weather, strong weather, burning weather, bad weather, rough weather.*

It's all about listening to the landscape. Listening to nature. And of course, not be afraid of getting lost. When you get lost you also lose your judgment, every mountaineer has heard stories about that. Then you start walking in circles and you don't believe that a stream flows in one direction instead of another one, even if you see it with your own eyes.

*It's looking bleak or it's growing dark, that's what they called it when the sky suddenly became dark during snowstorms or hail.*

I do not always realize where I am, but it's not the same as being lost.

*They called it snowdarkness when it got very dark and very cold.*

The one who is lost doesn't know where he is, or he doesn't know where he's going. Someone who is lost no longer knows where he is, or he does not know where he is going, he is in danger of experiencing this error of the senses, he starts walking in circles and in the end he loses more than the directions, he loses his reason...

We are always thinking about the same things. About where we are in the world

*Foul weather, stormy weather, violent weather, strong weather.*