

Over the Edge: Ben Stewart

'You lot are a hand-picked crew who fear nothing short of God. From the moment we set sail, we are embarking on a voyage few are brave enough for, and even fewer receive the opportunity for.' Captain Barnabas had told us these words at the dock before we untied The Icarus, and now the memory seems as distant as the horizon. But as we approach the precipice of our voyage – the world's edge, supposedly – I could not help but feel shame and regret for the reverie I experienced when the officials explained the 'scientific significance' of this exploratory voyage. The air was solemn; you could taste fear and trepidation through the manifold tendrils of the wind. The entire crew's faces were strained with uncertainty. A few of the boatswain watched 3 albatrosses circle overhead the crow's nest, attempting to divine what the birds knew of our fate. As we grew ever closer to the horizon, the hull and masts groaned and creaked with horrific apprehension.

'Captain!' First-mate Lucas shouted, 'it appears we are approaching the edge now!'

Captain Barnabas ran to the forecandle and upon reaching it, his arms dropped to his sides.

'Well, captain? What is it?', the helmsman called.

The captain did not answer for some time, until he turned slowly and dejectedly said, 'The Greeks were wrong.'

The entire populace of the ship ran towards the forecandle to catch a view of what lay ahead. Murmurs crescendoed to panic and lamentations. Terror quickly spread across the surface of the caravel like a pathogen of auditory transmission.

Various crew members asked the captain what could be done, but the wind was on our tail, and we could not turn from our course; the only option was acquiescence. A cacophony of prayers, tears, panic and melancholic submission could be heard and felt from even the crew's quarters. But a violent rhythm of metal smacking against wood silenced all forms of grief; the anchor had been released from the capstan. But the anchor continued to fall, and fall; and the wrought iron metronome became a soothing relief from the onslaught of mental anguish experienced by the boat. I walked to the forecandle and watched the sun's circumference complete itself as the bow of the boat peered over the edge into nothingness. The sun then swallowed the vessel and crew whole without a bite or a crunch.