

18. **A Mysterious Place**

The village and surroundings of Arbroath, Scotland, were mysterious to me. A small village overlooked by many travelers, Arbroath was once the site of the Scottish Parliament. It saw kings crowned, but now its castle stands in ruins and grass grows in the coronation hall. The ruins of an old monastery crumble next to the old castle. The ancient bell tower still stands and strong winds will cause the iron bell to ring erratically.

The cliff walks along the North Sea suit the ruins. The white chalky cliffs have been etched in bizarre patterns by cold northern winds. Boulders lie just under the sea's surface and extend several miles out from shore. Since the boulders cannot be seen, people appear to "walk on water," floating upon the salty foam. Devouring sea and sky and land, a light fog sometimes veils even these strange images.

Sunset glows briefly orange and gold. The sea, the cliffs, the castle, the monastery -- all become ghostly silhouettes black against the sky. Time itself seems captured in Evening's melancholy painting, slowly melting into the darkness.