

This landscape has a story to tell.

Volcanoes rose from the sea, weathered, collapsed, made soil. Waters rose and receded. Snow fell, ice formed, glaciers plowed. Grasses grew, and geese ate the grasses and fertilized the land. Wind blew.

The first people built homes of driftwood and sod and lived from the sea. Later people brought disease, took furs, acted badly. Names were attached—Murder Point, Massacre Bay, Massacre Valley.

Wind blew.

A much larger war came, two foreign forces fighting for an island neither really wanted. Bombs cratered the land. Men on one side humped their weapons and supplies up the valley, soaking and freezing their feet. Men on the other side defended from foxholes and caves. When the battle was over, 3000 were buried.

The winning side settled in with roads and huts, fuel tanks and ammo depots, poles with strung wire. Earth was trenched and terraced, piled into protective berms. When the threat of more war seemed past, structures were hauled off and materials cleaned up, leaving the rest to rust and rot.

In its never-ending story, the land slumps and softens into its wind-blown future. What does it tell us, of itself and ourselves, of what matters?

-- N. Lord