

In this time of global climate change with the polar caps melting faster than ever before, I felt it was important to call attention to these beautiful and important Arctic and Antarctica wilderness areas.

Arctic Sunrise - When I started writing *Arctic Sunrise*, I imagined an Inuit seeing the first sun on the horizon after six months of darkness. I wanted to create a feeling of awe, respect and humbleness. As we go through life, it is easy to think of our problems and fears as major. This causes so much emotional suffering. However, when we place ourselves between the Earth and the Universe, we come to understand that we are being taken care of by the Universe. Then all our problems become meaningless. In this sense the idea of an Arctic Sunrise - a time of coming out of the cold darkness into the beautiful warm light - can surely be interpreted as a spiritual awakening.

*And I think over again
My small adventures, my fears
Those small ones, that I thought so big*

*And yet
there is only one great thing ... the only thing*

*To live and see in huts and on journeys
The great day that dawns
And the light that fills the world!*

Ice Kingdom is representative of any ice-covered landscape, but my imagination was mainly triggered by stories that my mother used to tell about her childhood in Hungary where the winters can be exceptionally harsh. She described how the villages were snowed in and the people were not able to go outside for days. There is also something magical and mysterious about a cold, snow-covered landscape. The knowledge that the earth beneath that blanket of ice comes to life each spring is fascinating, almost miraculous.

The most dramatic and heart-wrenching piece on the album is the ten-and-a-half-minute epic "**Far Away From Home**", a tribute to Captain Robert Falcon Scott and his British expedition team that perished in Antarctica in 1912 when they raced to be the first explorers to the South Pole, but arrived a month after Roald Amundsen's Norwegian team.

I wrote the track "**Norway**" after a cruise to that country. As we entered a fjord I was standing on the bow of the ship and I imagined what it must have been like in ancient times when the Vikings would return home in their dragon-ship hearing their wives on the shore humming a welcoming song.

Aurora Sky - According to Inuit legend, auroras are believed to be the torches held in the hands of spirits seeking the souls of those who have just died to lead them over the abyss at the edge of the world. A narrow pathway leads across it to the land of brightness and plenty, where disease and pain are no more, and where food of all kinds is always ready in abundance. To this place none but the dead and the raven can go. When the spirits wish to communicate with the people of the earth they make a whistling noise and the earth people answer only in a whispering tone. The eskimo say that they are able to call the aurora and converse with it. They send messages to the dead through these spirits.

The tune "**Discovery**" captures the excitement of when explorers and scientists finally managed to travel all the way to the North and South Poles.

Spirit of the Last Wilderness was influenced by the fact that the Poles are basically the last mostly untouched places on our planet, and their Spirit asks us to keep them pure and unspoiled.