

Skogtatt – book extract

# SKOGTATT

BY

Ulfar Sevowy

*January/Midwinter/Night.*

Noise smashed its way out of the hut. It chewed inexorably into the cold night air like an animal unleashed, sinking iron teeth into the silence. The air was full of a music that raged with savagery and an unbearable hatred, music barely held in check by its own monotony. All around the hut, snow fell thickly through the air, a blizzard linking heaven and earth, and like the snow the music spread out and clung to every surface, mixed with the flurrying snow to make a single, ice-cold storm.

A man yelled hoarsely, desperately, his cold voice full of anger and bitterness, clawing long wounds into the weave of sound and frost and night that had spread itself across the clifftop here like a carpet of ice, that reached out far beyond.

The sound spun outward toward the forest at the edge of this clifftop clearing where the wooden hut stood. Not a word could be understood in this music, in the ugly distorted web of sounds that somehow fused into a smooth cacophony, stitched together into long loops and curls of melody that gave this madness its shape and form, lines of melody almost beyond the reach of the human ear. The music fumbled and raged and reached for the dark trunks of the trees, swung itself furiously aloft, tore and snatched at the dark snow-laden branches of the pines, and the branches shivered in its grasp and almost snapped, trembled and blurred as though the music were soaking into the world around, seeking a new world where sound and shape were one and the same. A music that touches the inmost depths, goes beyond words, music that conjures infinity.

The hut was built on a level clifftop. Just a few metres beyond it, the mountainside plunged away into the depths, down into the fjord. There, far below the hut, the cliff met

the water. Above the water, the mountain soared high while below, unseen, it reached down to terrifying depths.

On the other side of the clearing three cars are parked in front of the forest. They belong to the young men in the hut. They stand and sit there, wrapped in concentration, in their instruments, without looking at one another, and yet they are a close-knit group. Together they create an invocation, ever and again, over and over they call on something for which they yearn, something they nevertheless fear.

The guitar riffs, always the same, or with tiny variations, and the drum beats harsh, hard, inexorably fast, and riffs and drumbeat eat away at the walls of the hut, wear them thin so that the snow comes in, the snow and the cold, and the music mingles with the snow and the cold and there is only a white roar.