

**From *On the Phantom Air Ship Mystery*: Prelude**

Farmer John Martin  
Hunting six miles north

Strained to make out something dark  
Round as an orange

Passing high overhead  
Like a wide saucer

\*

Above  
A green field

A glittering  
Gold cigar

Dispatches  
Smaller craft

\*

At Greenwich Royal Observatory E. W. Maunder  
Observed on the horizon east-northeast  
Course smooth as any heavenly body's

But a thousand times faster  
A great disc of greenish light  
Cross the meridian and pass

Just above the moon  
Cigar spindle shuttle shaped  
Lost to sight in two minutes

Nothing more unlike the rush  
Of a meteor or fireball  
Its quick sure flight

\*

Nine hundred nautical miles off Ascension Island  
They say a nine-hundred foot ovoid lit on each end  
Sink making mechanical sounds as the steamer closed

\*

Just after noon  
    thirty miles northwest  
        rancher J. W. Ellis  
Three herders  
    and cowboys  
        rounding up his ponies  
Riding up on a draw  
    heard a roar  
        rush overhead  
The meteor fell  
    just the other side  
        of the hill  
That mounted  
    viewed it  
        bound over another draw  
Galloping after  
    around bits  
        and pieces  
Of white machinery  
    in black circles  
        of burnt grass  
They reined in  
    over the steep ravine  
        in burned in  
Bill Alfson braved  
    its billows of burning heat  
        not half a minute  
Before face blistered  
    hair singed half away  
        he fell  
Face down  
    before the core temperature  
        risen from over 200 feet below  
They carried him back  
    past the impact site  
        across a hiss  
Of boiled sand  
    now cooling  
        in pools and runs  
That night a north storm  
    poured visibility to under a rod  
        for half an hour  
With dawn they ran down  
    into the ravine

flailing the rush water waist deep  
After  
    only small pools  
        of some jelly  
Thinned  
    in the muddy water  
        ran off  
Leaving  
    just faintly  
        the air sweet

\*

Afloat over Adrianople  
A glowing red cigar-shaped craft  
Flashed intense search lights

\*

For five minutes  
Off Cape Cod  
A red glowing

Rose from the ocean  
Over sixty feet  
To sail into the wind

Pause by the ship  
Turn elliptical  
And rise away

\*

...unscrupulous journalism...  
...contagious rumours...  
...deliberate hoaxes...

\*

All over Nebraska  
    Phantom Air Ship  
        parties