

DEEP WHEEL ORCADIA  
A NOVEL



HARRY JOSEPHINE GILES

# Deep Wheel Orcadia

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PICADOR POETRY

# Taeble o Contents

[The Fock](#)

[Wan](#)

[Astrid docks](#)

[Inga Lighter an Øyvind Grower waatch Astrid come in](#)

[The visietor, Darling, leuks fer a piece tae bide](#)

[Astrid an Darling settle in](#)

[Olaf Lighter an Eynar o the Hoose speir at the new teknolojy](#)

[Higgie the Codd at her screens](#)

[Astrid sketches Orcadia](#)

[The pieces Darling's been](#)

[Inga an Olaf at the lighteen](#)

[Øyvind Astridsfaither, wirkan](#)

[The arkaeolojist at the Wrack-Hofn](#)

[Astrid gangs tae kirk](#)

[Darling gangs tae view the wracks](#)

[Olaf Lighter hishan his bairn tae sleep](#)

[Gunnie Margitsbairn nyargs at thir mither](#)

[Øyvind Grower an Eynar o the Hoose tak an eveneen class](#)

[A alt-arkaeolojist visits wi Noor](#)

[Higgie the Codd clocks aff](#)

[Astrid meets the visieter, Darling](#)

Twa

Darling an Astrid waatch a Lightstoor

Inga raeds a airticle aboot the Lights

Higgie the Codd seeks expert advice

Eynar snecks up

Darling an Astrid tak a waak trou the wynds o Meginwick

Thay spaek aboot Mars

Inga an Olaf spaek bisness

Astrid casts back tae a pal fae the college

Darling jacks the news

Noor needs a drink

Øyvind's notions

Astrid lairns Darling a new dance

Astrid taks Darling haem fer dinner

Young Brenna at the Ting

Noor an Eynar spaek eftir the Ting

Darling's body

Astrid canno draa yet

Gossip is Orcadia's craesh

Gunnie Margitsbairn canno keep a secret

Noor draems

Darling catches wurd fae haem

Inga taks her yole oot

Astrid taks Darling tae a meun

Tree

Astrid shaas Darling her wark

Inga is waantan pey

Darling peys Olaf fer a hurl

Astrid speirs her faither fer advice

Darling gies Eynar the tael

The Dance

Gunnie an Brenna imajin futures

Astrid, oot

[Darling meets Margit Lighter fer bisness](#)

[Eynar pits oot a advert](#)

[Stoor](#)

[Notes and Thanks](#)



## **The Fock**

ASTRID, a artist, comed haem tae Orcadia

INGA, her mither, captain o a lighteen yole

ØYVIND, Astrid's faither, a maet tekniecian

DARLING, a visietor fae Mars

NOOR, a xeno-arkaeolojist

EYNAR, a steward o the Hoose

OLAF, a lighter wi Inga

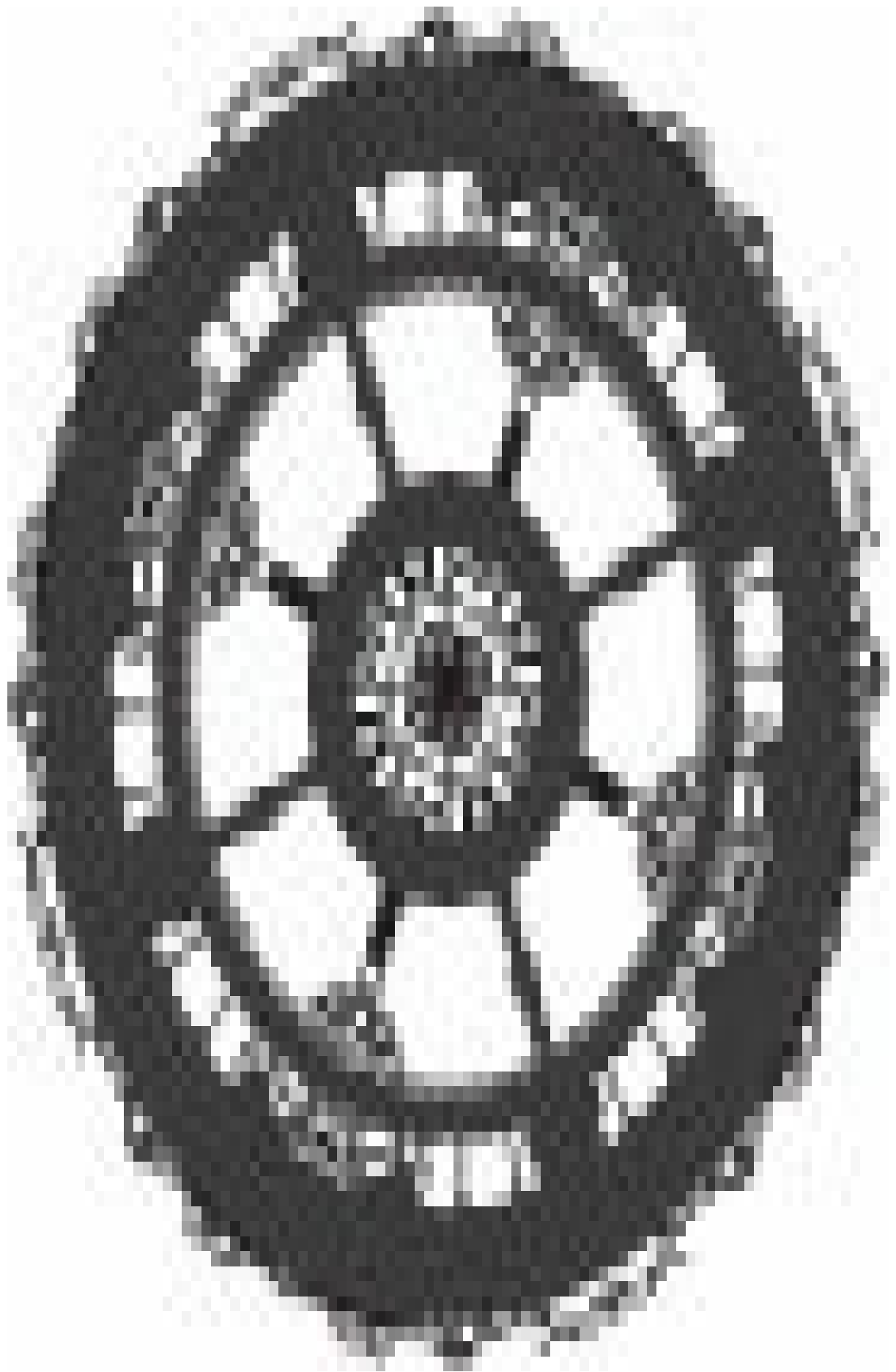
HIGGIE, a sisadmin at the Light refinery

MARGIT, a lighter wi her awn yole

BRENNA, a young radiecal

GUNNIE, a junior tekniecian, an bairn o Margit

Ither Orcadians: ASLAUG, AUGA, DAGMAR, ERIKA, ERLEND, INGRID, KARI, SIGURD, TORSTEN, UNN, an plenty more, an thir bairns.



## **The People**

ASTRID, an artist, come home to Orcadia

INGA, her mother, captain of a lighting boat

ØYVIND, Astrid's father, a foodmeat technician

DARLING, a visitor from Mars

NOOR, a xeno-archaeologist

EYNAR, a landlord of the local bar

OLAF, a lighter with Inga

HIGGIE, a systems administrator at the Light refinery

MARGIT, a lighter with her own boat

BRENNA, a young radical

GUNNIE, a junior technician, and Margit's child

Other Orcadians: ASLAUG, AUGA, DAGMAR, ERIKA, ERLEND, INGRID, KARI, SIGURD, TORSTEN, UNN, and many more, and their children.

Wan

## **Astrid docks**

The chime o the tannoy is whit taks her back,  
fer hid isno chaenged, nae more as the wirds  
summonan her tae the airlock: her wirds,  
at sheu isno heard fer eyght geud year.

Sheu waatched the Deep Wheel approach, gray-green,  
hids Central Staetion tirlan yet  
anent the yallo yotun, peedie  
bolas teddert aroon hids ring,

pierheids trang wi yoles, wi glims,  
an fund the gloup atween ootbye an in  
clossan slaa – but only noo,  
wi this soond, deus sheu ken whar sheu is.

Sheu leuks aroon the ither fock,  
tryan tae mynd wha's uncan, an wha's  
whas bairn, an wha's gien a naem fae sheu left,  
an whas naem sheu shoud mynd yet.

An Astrid leuks tae anither body,  
stannan at the vizzie-screen:  
taall, pael, reid hair ravsie,  
Martian style, gappan at the sight.

Sheu coud been a student fae college, but no  
like Astrid, at waants tae waatch her an kinno  
disno: sheu's ferfil bonnie an warld-like  
fer Mars, but here i'the ramse poly

habitats o inner space,  
sheu's a aafil queerie sowl.

The visietor leuks aroon an grins  
at Astrid, at leuks away, no kennan

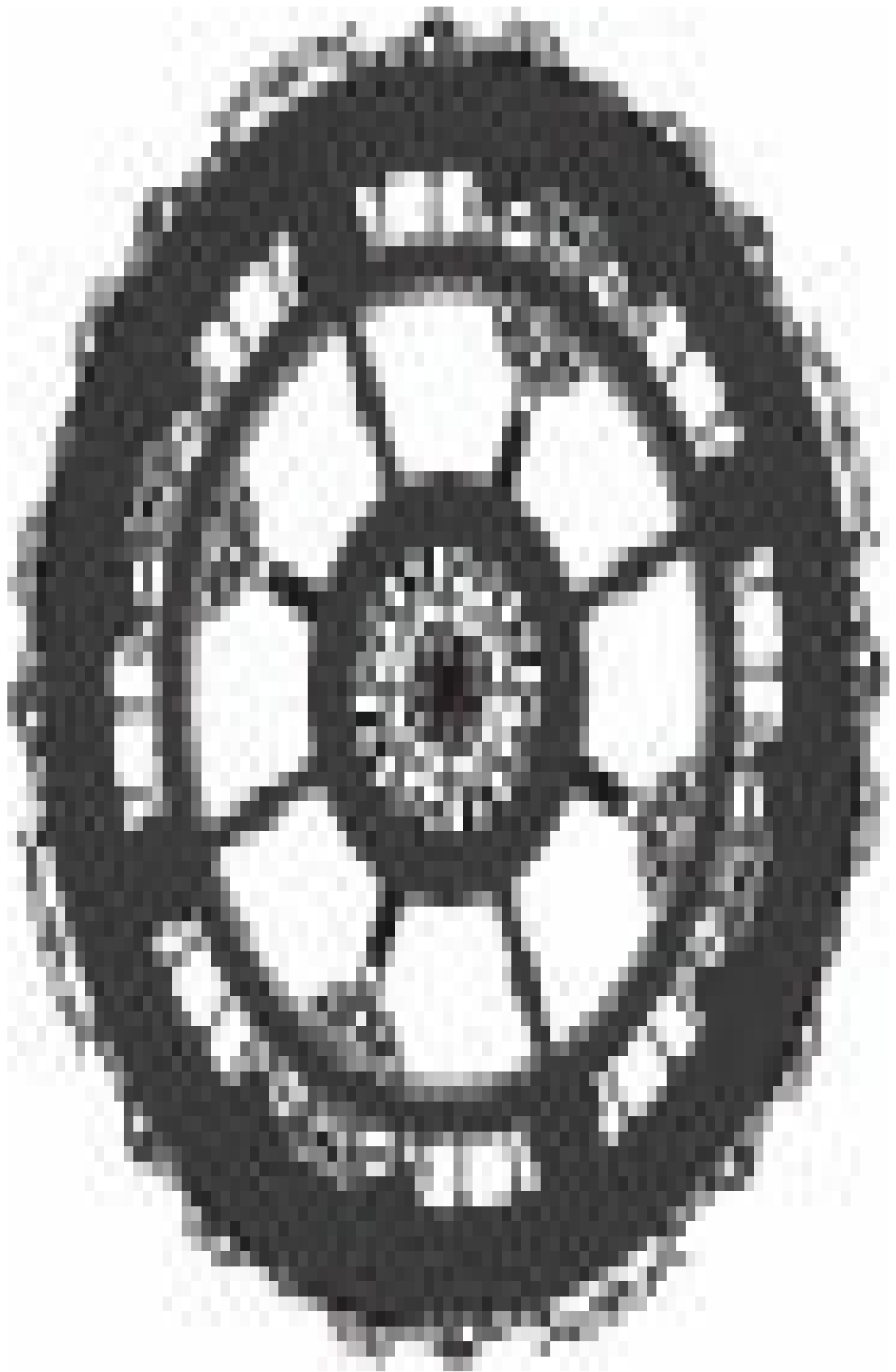
whit wey tae meet incoman joy.

The jaas o the transport appen, a gant  
thrumman the bonns o the ship, a kord  
whan the gangwey connects. Astrid's taen

a peedie an weyghty life on her back,

an whan sheu steps intae the airlock  
sheu catches the grief o whit will come  
if the pairts o her canno find thir piece.





## **Astrid docks**

The chime of the tannoy is what brings her back, because it hasn't changed, and neither have the words summoning her to the airlock: her words, which she hasn't heard for eight goodlong years.

She watched the Deep Wheel approach, grey-green, its Central Station still turntwistwhirlspinning againstaboutbefore the yellow gas giant, little bolas ropemoormarried around its ring

pierheads fullactiveintimate with boats, with gleampointlights, and found the chasmcleft between outside and inside closing laxslowly – but only now, with this sound, does she know where she is.

She looks around the other folk, trying to rememberknowreflectwill who is strangerweird, and who is whose child, and who's taken a name since she left, and whose name she should still rememberknowreflectwill.

And Astrid looks at another personbody, standing at the viewing screen: tall, pale, red hair roughabundantunkempt in a Martian style, gapingfoolishmindless at the sight.

She could have been a student from college, but not like Astrid, who wants to watch and also doesn't: she's veryfearfully finepretty and healthynormal for Mars, but here in the roughcurtbitter plasticpolymer

habitats of inner space, she's a veryawfully strangequeer soulperson. The

visitor looks around and grinyeans at Astrid, who looks away, not knowing

whathowwherewhy to meet incoming joy. The jaws of her transport open, a yawngasp thrumming the bones of the ship, a chord when the gangway connects. Astrid's brought

a little and heavymeaningful life on her back, and when she steps into the airlock, she begins to feel grief about what will happen if the parts of her can't find their placedistancepartwhile.

## **Inga Lighter an Øyvind Grower waatch Astrid come in**

Inga is thinkan, whit wey tae explaen  
the staetion noo? That scant the lighteen,  
that scrimp the tithes. Øyvind is fashan  
at whither or no her vooels'll come haem.

Inga rubs her clippert heid  
an thinks: Varday is tint the haalage,

Aikeray the traed, an only  
the kirk is ivver fill, fer prayan.

Øyvind birls a pod in his lang  
fingers an waatches the ship link

intae Meginwick's muckle dock,  
a cathedral o girders an stances appenan

intae the haaf. Inga coonts