Sundial:

(To be read with “Nautically Nebulous”)

Dr. Gregory Butterscotch looked on at the havoc in his backyard with a quiet smile on his face. How pleased he was to have the grass and shrubbery torn up violently from their rightful place in the earth and replaced with non-native flora. From end to end, machines shredded up the grass and pumped the air with smoke.

Dr. Butterscotch had long ago attended Miskatonic University with a major in coastal ruins and a minor in antiquarian symbology. For years he had vigorously traveled the world in search of some great find, but alas had never found it. But it was alright because he had been on astounding adventures one could only dream up and was now delighted to enjoy the peaceful ending of his years.

He took his smile outside as he stepped through the backdoor. He had heard some yelling and went to investigate. The boss intercepted him at his porch.

“Sir, are you familiar with any sedimentary buildup underneath your yard?”

“Why, no. Why do you ask?”

“One of our workers hit a rock and we may need a couple more days to finish clearing that area.” Dr. Butterscotch was intrigued and ushered his way over to the commotion. The blaring June sun was beating down hard and he had worked up quite a sweat by the time he got to the site. As the worker had said, there was a semi-large rock jutting out from the dirty earth below. It was gray and sharp towards the top and somewhat half-resembled that of a pseudo-quasi obeliscal structure he had once read about in an ancient textbook.

“I…Is it possible for you to dig around this area today? Clear this thing out?” He looked expectantly at the worker.

“I’ll see what I can do.”

“Just, be careful.”

Finally, it was the moon’s turn to light up the sky. The workers had gone for the day, but not before uncovering the rock. Dr. Butterscotch now stood next to it, notepad and pencil in hand. Amazingly, the rock stood about 3 feet tall with a diameter nearly the size of a fist. Below it was a large circular slab that boasted beautiful bedazzlements and highly unusual inscriptions. It wasn’t quite writing, but rather images. A thin outer layer of numbers lined the edge in a cryptic font void of any particular pattern; carvings of odd monoptic creatures riddled the middle; several derivations of anguish and horror engraved the inner circle. Besides that, many smaller symbols floated carelessly around the slab, some of which Dr. Butterscotch could make out, others he could not.

All night he sat there writing away at his notepad, trying to capture, if anything at all, the terrible formations and troubling triangulations of the unforgiving obelisk. And as first light made its way to his backyard, his suspicions were confirmed that what he was in fact looking at was a sundial. Frantically, he started scribbling again in his notepad, all the while overtaken by the eldritch collection of symbols. “Cloud…take left…Annunakis?..sub-cosmic phenom…ichthyic.” His words became ever-maddening and his pulse ever-heightening. Faster and faster he scribbled, trying to catch his thoughts before they left, his mind running, eyes flickering and shifting from visions of old textbook specimens to mental atrocities to the monoptic hideousness that girdled the stone slab until he had exhausted enough and threw himself down on the silver lawn to rest.

Large, rocky, bubbles. Floating in the black, again that *thing*! Must swim, must swim! But you can’t and it pulls, ever-watching, ever-waiting.

“Aah!” He awoke with a jolt. The lawn. The sundial. It all came flooding back. Dr. Butterscotch was on the verge of the nightmare but…*Must’ve taken too much xenopropanol.* He looked at his watch. 12:00, June 21. His skin was burning and he looked up to see the sun high in the sky; then he looked at the sundial.

Dr. Butterscotch had seen a lot of evil caricatures on the way to his PhD. Many twisted visions that remained in his mind not for their blood or vileness, but for their perplexing oddity and frightening consequences. Sometimes, even the most ordinary of objects can cause the most terrible of shocks if examined in the right place at the right time. It was of this mindset that Dr. Butterscotch looked towards the sundial and it was of this mindset that he locked his imagination up to thousands of years of fear. For, black against the stoney slab, lay two strokes of shadow.

“But…12:00…the solstice…why is there a…” Quick. The notebook. He ripped it out and hurriedly sketched the sight. He looked at it, marking down the outer numbers the shadows fell to. 30. 70. And then, as fast as they came in, they were gone. “Okay, 30, 70, where do you go…” Dr. Butterscotch moved over to the sundial and found where the shadows had crossed. He ran his hand through their paths and found that they intersected many hideous images, however, one was even more hideous than the rest.

He took a step back. “The *thing*…that’s…” It was the monster from his nightmare, although he could’ve sworn it wasn’t there before. Something larger was at play here, and Dr. Butterscotch was determined to find it at all costs. *30, 70, what is that? A year? A dimension? No, fool, it’s a coordinate! It’s always a coordinate!* He jumped up and whipped out his pocket map. 70 N, 30 W. Greenland? What could there…the mountains of…maybe. 30 N, 70 W. Just south of Bermuda? *Bubbles.* *Must swim.* A skeletal shiver shook his innards and dismantled his diligence. It has to be. The bloody Bermuda Triangle! “I’ll find that thing and I’ll kill it!” So, Dr. Butterscotch, still fettered to his fear, yet forging the key of curiosity, hurried back to his house and booked the first flight out to Bermuda.

“Yes, yes, I’ll need it immediately. No, the first one. Right over there. How long? Oh, couldn’t say, two days, max?” Dr. Butterscotch stood in prospect of one of the most beautiful submarines he had ever laid eyes on, of course, he hadn’t seen very many. It was utterly tubular in nature with a long winding hull.

“Okay, I’ll be accompanying you down, just tell me where to go. We’ll jettison from here overmorrow.”

“Thank you, that’d be great Mr….”

“Humbleberry, Emmett Humbleberry.”

With that, a nod. “Mr. Humbleberry, I’ll see you in the water in two days’ time.”

The sub shoved its way down through the ocean, trying as it may to reach 30 N, 70 W. “Dr. Butterscotch, I know you’ve paid an enormous sum of cash as a means for intentional anonymity, but seeing as we’re both confined to the sub together, may I take the liberty in asking exactly why you so evidently must reach 30 N, 70 W?” Mr. Humbleberry faced towards the old man, the prospective glint of curiosity shining through his eyes.

“Well, it’s…” At the spur of the question the visions swept back in; the hideous engravings and tantalizing symbols, the archaic font and monoptic monstrosities. Overwhelmingly, his mind was once again cluttered by a multitude of anguishing relics, small scribbles floating by, but one solid figure in the background. The terrible lulling hideousness that stood guard in his head casting out benevolent thoughts and replacing them with evil. “Just…find the coordinates!..kill it!” His head ached terribly and his body trembled even worse. No longer could he open his eyes in light of the fact that he would never again think a sterile thought. Mr. Humbleberry was rushing now, talking to him desperately as his uncouth psychiatrist.

“Sir, are you alright? What’s going on?”

But the pains were unmanageable, untolerable, unconquerable and he could no longer breathe, the hellish mental miasma spreading into his lungs and tearing up his innards from their rightful place. It was all he could do to squeeze out his final message before the stygian asphyxiation took hold of his life, “Find 30 N, 70 W and kill that daemon!!”