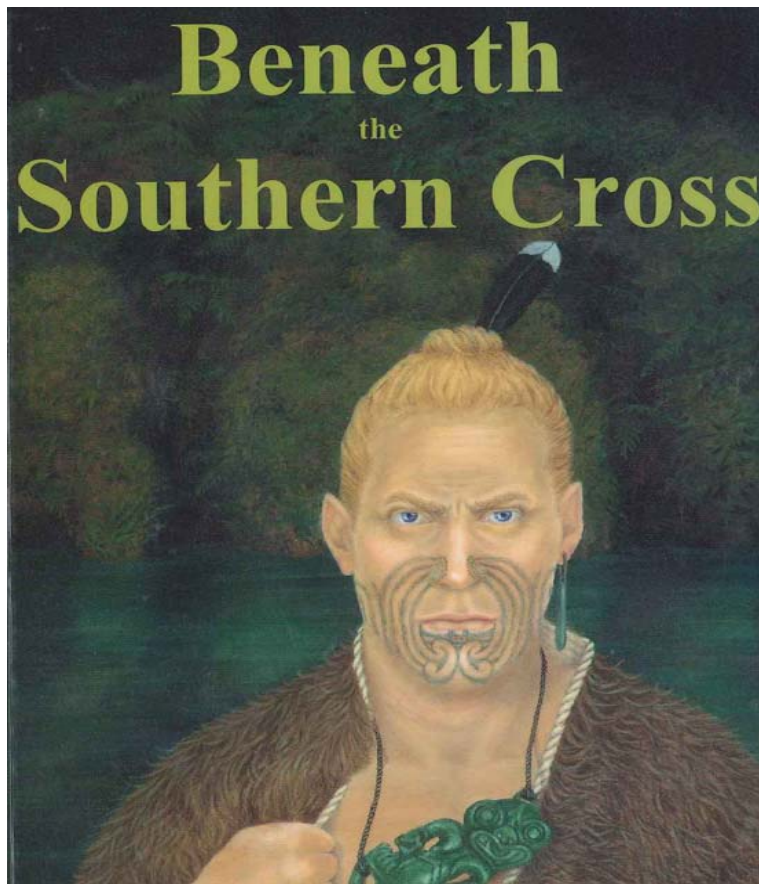


“Beneath the Southern Cross” by Graham Sturgeon, 2008.



Lafe, the eighteen year old son of a New England whaler, sets sail in 1800 on the *Northern lights*, a ship destined for the South Pacific. Whale oil and seal skins are highly prized commodities in the world of commerce, and a sealing party, led by Lafe, will be put ashore for six months on the islands of New Zealand, better known as the Cannibal Isles.

Dangers abound for the ship and its crew – from harpooned whales that drag their chasers across the ocean, to the uncharted rocky coastline that the mother ship must navigate. Should the ship founder, unfriendly tribes may await survivors. Lafe is captured and despairs of ever returning to homeland America. His captor suggests a tattoo will raise Lafe’s status from survivor to warrior, and this improved status will permit him to marry the chief’s daughter. In the whiteman’s eyes, the tattoo will forever mark him Lafe as a savage.

Graham also wrote “Dustoff for Willie Peters: a New Zealand hunter’s journey through Vietnam” in 1998.