The Jellyfish Nebula - IC443

30,000 to 50,000 years ago an enormous star, a red supergiant, having finally consumed all of its available nuclear fuel, was destroyed by the crushing forces of gravity. This caused an explosion that blasted the remains of the star into the surrounding space. The energy released interacts with the surrounding interstellar medium, causing it to glow as you see here. The blast radius is still expanding at the rate of about 30 to 40 kms a second.

Roughly 70 light years across in the constellation of Gemini the Twins, the nebula is 5,000 light years away. This light set off in the year 2974BC. All that remains of the star that exploded is the crushed core - a Neutron star - about the size of a city but with the mass of 1.4 times that of our Sun. A teaspoon would weigh 5.5 billion tons or 500 times the Great Pyramid of Giza.