

The Seagull

Still expanse.

Silver-blue.

The horizon

Pencil-thin, sketched

A distant line

Stretching tight

Between the chalky gleam

Of the bay's cradling arms.

Now: ropes coiled, life-jackets stowed, sea-dog's baccy floating on the still morning air,

All smiles, clattering calls, and waving hats.

The seagull cries, a complaint, and

Slowly lifts from the prow

Weaving, now, the wisps and wreathes of thin grey smoke,

Then drops back,

Slipstreaming the chuff and chug of the little boat's leaving,

Totters and swoops, ready for sandwich, crust, apple-core, or sprat.

And so, the slow day stretches ahead

As the trail of white leads brightly back

To fade, and drop forever, into the dark, blue, depths.

As we round the point, the day turns too:

Anchor splash, bathing trunks, sausages sizzle

And the smell of sardines: a siren's call,

With campfire sparks lost to the dome of the endless sky.

Aboard again we doze, we rock, lulled by the skipper's sweet refrain,

To dream of pearls and mermaids with waves of golden hair...

...now, suddenly awake, faces slammed and slapped by the sting of hail

Picnic plates lift, then a cup, then a hat, whipped to the seas
All sun wiped out, the horizon forever gone,
The world rocks, bucks, rolls, from its moorings ripped
Now up is down, and east is west
Our screams drowned by the shriek of wind and the banshee's wail...

...If a boat can limp, we do - to port.

The seagull stands, proud, head thrown to the skies,

Opens wide his beak, and cries:

We are come, we are back

We are safe, and we are sound

We are trim, we're intact

And only

The captain

Drowned.

