

9. THE GREAT GALLEON

I'm twirling some pasta round a fork,
watching a comet arc across the sky.
I'm tallying up all my regrets and listening to
a man at the bar talking balls to some other guy.

Shirley used to pout and smoulder
but she's grown sadder as the years roll by,
time's burnt her down like a flame does a candle
and every word she speaks sounds like some kind of goodbye.

"Who's a great guy? I am! Who's a natural winner? Why, me!"
says the man at the bar, his martini lifted high,
I'm guessing years of disappointment
buried deep by gin and fake bonhomie.

So let the moon limp home before me,
the wind roll a can up the road ahead
or I could stay, order some top-dollar bottle,
sit and listen to my old, boarded-up heart instead.

No, I'll order just one more glass of sunshine,
light a candle in the church on my way home.
In this year of our Lord two thousand-whenever-the-hell we are,
let it not be denied I was bon vivant down to the bone.

The guy at the bar's at the piano now,
some kind of maestro, Liberace or Jerry Lee.
Guess he's the onboard cabaret where we're all headed,
the great galleon of day drifting west into the night, glory be.

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