

"You'll meet half the world on your wedding trip,
You'll know a new feel in your feet.
You'll learn to see with your ears and your nails
As you lean from the Petrel's rails.

"Her teakwood is smooth and her ribs are sound
And she's soaked with a salt-spice smell.
We'll take you and wake you to things unbelieved
By folks who are chained to the ground.

"I'll teach you to handle both her and the crew,
To respond to the wings of the sea
With rhythm as heathen, caresses as light;
I'll teach you to love only me."

Perfumed spindrift pervaded her head,
His images, promises, touch.
The heat of his flesh was against her cheek;
She caught herself hearing too much.

She wrenched from his arms and tried to unspell
Them both, harshly chastened her heart.
For her mind was as fixed as a buoy bell
Long before a boy hastened her heart.

She forced her stare back where a wave came to break,
For this was no boy but a man—
As tall and as sure as his Petrel's masts;
She was swamped like a skiff in his wake.