

Noreen stayed long on the fog-struck beach
With fringes of foam round her knees
While staring for years at each square-rigged ship
Slipping in on the morning breeze.

Her hope reached the depth of her scuttled pride.
Then one day the Petrel returned.
She barely believed her widened eyes
As the crew came ashore for supplies.

None ever heard of an owner named Woods.
She was bought from a Captain Quayle.
One man remembered a rumor about
A master who vanished-- a gale--

Noreen kept on swimming beyond the shoal,
Her eyes on a distant gull
Skimming and circling quicksilver patrol
Over a half-sunken hull.

The ale is strong at the Great Auk Inn
Like it was when canvas was king.
The years wash back if you let time spin,
And listen to figureheads sing.

The old sea dogs squint out at the bay
Each dusk when the water looks brown,
Then tell their tales of love and sails
And watch the birds dive down.