

"Oh sailor, go follow the farthest tern,
My father invented your creed.
He lured my mother out there where she died.
I know all about your breed.

"And sister, mistress, mother, myth,
She'll claim you quarry yet.
She'll pull you down to her altar rocks
Where skulls like yours are set.

"With sequin flash and colored beads
She'll weave your mossy shroud,
And blazon your bones with turtle dung
And crown your love with weeds.

"What can you give me but cold and storm,
My face full of freezing rain,
And a heaving house and a rolling bunk
For my swelling belly of pain?

"You talk about flowers and gems down deep,
All mine if I'll be your bride.
It's slimy sand and chains of kelp,
Shell-cuts on my shins in the tide.

"You offer spume, hardtack and rust,
A drunken lamp, a creaking floor,
The hidden claws of the coral reef,
And a green eternal door.

cont.