

Feebles *in* Night

A word arrangement by

David Blue

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*To Brent,
whose genuine kindness, loyalty and love in friendship surely
have no parallel in existence.*

When one finds oneself with a warranting quantity of recognizable talent in word arrangement, but lacking in the discipline required for a respectable profession, I think a collection of this kind is a sort of inevitability. *Feebles in Night* is the aftermath of some five years of wholly irregular & nocturnal thought spillage and nostalgic memory fragments, but I have made my most valiant attempt to compile it in the definitively optimal manner for reader enjoyment, reflection, or inspiration. You'll note my tendency to play with wordage – sometimes violently – but such is the privilege allowed me by this medium. From my perspective, it is perhaps the most essential quality to my works' originality. It is my sincere hope that some soul-derived insight and value will be manifest for yours.

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Lifetime Membership

Belt-driven attic fan,
 curious
 Hearing punctual freight trains in the heavens
 already willing it to rub off
 Hard at work,
 building
 waiting
 excepting
 the chamber pot,
 inhaling
 cracking leather
 on the relic

Schwinn over
 Main's embossed crossing
 past absentee-doted bushes
 over the driveway's entry
 jagged canyon
 two creaking screendoors
 (leaves, leaked)
 pat the mouldsteps
 to the twineswing
 by the naked bulb's pullchain
 with the best view of
 the forgotten sandbox
 where one could excavate

clump'δ plastic Shermans
 and creased Army men
 under the baby-powdered
 bathroom's drain
 and remember
The Bomb
 and smell death

It's not good for it
 Always,
 Susan
 Suzanne, at least?
 I tried to cycle a gritty cap gun
 but cowboys bore me

It's just canδid cadence,
 so his pacemaker's ok,
 right?
How tiring
 Tear a whole day from Kiwanis' year
 Examining up and down,
 an auger under load
 than Ghandi,
 superior lucidity
 Asked politely to soften on the organ
 (pot-luckers absentmindedly exchanged recipes and are ess vee
 peas)

Granola flakes on colored paper
 but Slim was always with me
 from Peoria,
 thru-front flaring
 nibbling on a ham sandwich
 with a splinty broom
 entombed by the fireplace
 under die-casts and lanyards
 and taboos

Bite me, Cold
 I'll stop at the y-lot
No isn't always no

Blacksheep from the secret tower rooms
 since forgotten stage wiring
 is infinitely more enchanting than
 distant cousins' water balloons

Mesh-umbrella's cheap labor
 born around her open switches
 and chandelier moods

I leave my body for the knobbly ceiling,
 note the Lutheran taffy wrapper
 in my pocket

Sieve

The swath of energy,
 constant
 swivels over chaff
 and stalk,
 alike

I come down from the great pinging creature
 through the rainbow's pockets of heat
 it's already released
 I'm always thinking about the loyalty of gauges
 like simple friends or
 the starchiest click's acquaintance,
 they point as best they can
 to the truest truth of the moment

Communication is never tangible
 but it can be aspired to
 through it
 you can tame voids or
 in haste,
 consume the fawn
 bedded 'neath the stalks
 or ignore the odor
 until the flames lick out the hopper

Tell me

how the brigade goes
 earnestly chaining
 so we'll visit at the bar later

Even hacking up black dust,
 I am grateful
 for my hours of seeing it
 through the panoramic window
 of the county bathysphere

I spin with my feet
 my right hand outstretched
 if I go fast enough
 I feel the air
 on the pads of my fingers
 A cool counter top
 summoned in any time
 or orientation I desire
 If I could eat it,
 It would taste like sherbet
 It's too bad
 there wasn't ever any mystery
 in the marble smoothness of my
 own little atmospheric disturbance
 even when I was too little
 for my hand to make an audible whistle

To My Little Tractor

I heard that you'd found a new family recently
and I wondered
how strange it would be for anyone
to do with you the things we did once
without knowing my name

I think about the condition
of your fame
as you approach your centennial
and what people will say
and what they haven't

I remember the day we met
and an old white display,
covered in ashes

I was military-marching
through a muddy field
full of tired old implements
Some had rusted beyond identification
others were clinging to the better side
of the line between usefulness and nostalgia

It was so wet,
the ground didn't seem itself
It absorbed my cold rubber boots

They made sucking noises
in tune with their smacking against my calves
You sat with your ridiculous face
Your fading orange paint
That big black cylinder with the flush pulley
I couldn't stop staring at it

Some bolts were missing

Your wide bus steering wheel
that left black grit and an old
smell on my hands

I laughed at the placement of your
pedals and the deckplating noise
they made when depressed

I looked right and left,
and saw your cracked tires peeking
above those old gray fenders
like shoulders
in perfect symmetry

The inside of your wheels
attached to orange drum brakes with a mechanical rod

I pushed and pulled your shifter

through old gears
(without synchromesh)
and watched the stale boot as it
bent and split, its lips forming
some personified embarrassing function
Even your cooling fan was orange,
with the belt that drove it

Your throttle looked like an orange thermometer
When I pulled it down through the notches,
your fan sounded exactly like the great night fans
on the grain bins
(They could blow me over and hurt my ears)
I giggled,
bouncing on your seat,
enjoying your beauty in every angle

You were still a snotty little bully
among the larger things
seventy years later
Font tires so thin,
they appeared useless
I loved watching them so much,
I once lied to dad and
said I didn't notice their sodding
of the pasture grass as they tilted
and turned

You must've seemed ahead of your time
 ten years after you were built
 A cute accessory to the returning soldier's
 ten-acre paradise

The crowd moved about the field,
 following a red-striped auctioneer
 like old donkeys led
 A mass of faded hats with bankrupt seed company logos,
 denim shirts, cigarettes, and Dickies coats

I'm guessing they smoked
 and laughed at crude jokes
 but honestly,
 I never bothered to notice

Though it was a little embarrassing when
 the mob surrounded us
 and the auctioneer used
 the word *cute*
 a few times

Oddly enough, we did make a pair,
 you and I
 A seven-year-old kid
 on a tiny tractor ten times it

We weren't worth much to anyone,
together or apart

You'd seen as much as my grandpa
and you expected to sink down
in that mud with dignity,
holding eye contact with the old house
as it shed shingles,
both of you giggling at fate

Appear in some old farmer's field of vision
every once in a while
In his thoughts,
even less

The picture we made humored
the murder members who'd had enough coffee,
and I grew angry

The red-striped auctioneer yelled
for someone to start you

I whirled my little hands
to convince your starter
wewopwewopwopwewopwop
I pulled out your choke
You spat black smoke
that smelled of old lubricant remedies

with exclamations on the can
The whine of your orange fan
as its blades turned
to a sold translucent pancake

I carefully modulated your controls
before looking up with pride
But all we'd done was stop the smiling
I hadn't redeemed you much
I felt like crying
Somebody told me to stop your engine
and the bidding began

Nobody was thrilled
The process reeked of obligation

I tried to figure out where your ears were
so I could cover them

But then dad raised his hand
and it didn't seem like much of a surprise
We'd already been matched,
you and I
All the others sensed it too,
and went about their business
of obscuring wisdom
And so, we came to be together

Dad's attempts to get you on a trailer
 with a slipping clutch
 bore the first time I laughed at him

I laughed again
 when we drained your oil
 It smelled as if it had soured
 and looked like soupy cottage cheese

I laughed at
 your darting travel method
 Dad called you *squirrely*

I'm sure whoever made you was
 very confused about what you should be
 not that it ever bothered me

We mowed a lot of grass
 I did a lot of sneezing
 The heads hit your grill and
 I wondered if you were allergic like me
 Maybe you wanted some antihistamines?
 We didn't always mow straight or fast,
 but we'd get the job done
 Our pace and reliability equally
 frustrating for dad

Remember
that evening we mowed the acre patch West
of your shed?
On top of the hill,
we could see the red sun
as it began to hide in the neighbors' milo
and you crawled through yellow fescue,
humming in reliable intent

I knew you were observing
the moment like I was
Maybe you thought,
too
of how we'd always be together

Twenty or thirty years from then,
we would live the same scene
Except it would be somewhere a little colder
where I wouldn't sneeze
and the three-point's discharge
would smell like tea
And wouldn't be there
to be frustrated with us

I'd have my own money for gas
to pour under your flying cap

I could drive you to school
if I wanted to and
show you to all my friends

We'd participate in those stupid parades,
milling around town,
throwing candy at children,
looking our best

I'm sorry to say now
I have no place to keep you where I'm living
I'd get ticketed if I took you to school
(I don't have any friends there anyway)
I have no grass to mow
and I'm not much fun anymore

So,
I guess I shouldn't regret
not coming to get you,
or my lack of time spent with you there
I know what we had is something
I'll be trying to get back
for a very long time

Be glad you've aged so slowly

I leave you dotingly
with fondness and well wishes

I hope you dirty another conspirator's hands
and that they will become a friend
who will do with you
all the things little boys
and little tractors should do

Pain is a disease
Pick one tree,
plant straight beans
breathe
steady
squeeze

Leaking

creaking plastic
 camcorder tape
 the noise it makes
 red light catch up
 it drips up the sidewalk
 the sky is blue under
 haphazardly-scattered
 white veins
 wrapping around
 the entirety of everything,
 a little less organized than the ones
 wiggling toward my hands
 (they weren't visible, then)
 everything has some
 bright label on it
 the plastic seams
 itch my
 bug bites when
 I slip
 wobble wheel wing nut
 chlorine urine
 on the seat

Everdrear peacing edge
 between missed streetlamp frontier
 treeline-plotted
 arithmetic

On Fear of Δeath

It's the smallness
 of wanton regiment that
 reminds one of the ever-approaching
 nothingness
 and the proximal moments
 stacked ahead to bar their dusk

The sound of the voice that
 should fill a last hour and
 the logistical implications of
what if have come to weigh
 upon me as the leaves
 turn
 as the crawling things go,
 and leave me with peace enough
 to hear such silence and
 reflect upon the crowding teeth
 in my skull
 and permanence

Eager,
 on the Milo with his gun
 hear 'em waiting for fun
 for the dust obscuring the dark
 passing the lord's time on a VCR
 I saved my voice for
 Revelation on the terrace

Visit

We gave another bushel of apples
to the sunroom yesterday,
waiting for company to show

Windows are walls,
late-rectifier in the country
The old house with
comparative vulnerability
but never stagnancy
moving more,
always
enough for the self
to be grape 'n' blueberry-speckled
cushion

traveling
have to drone, clench
ration attention
supper slave,
nodding
attempting to contain escape-seeking
Conserve
tot lorde of constriction
time-hung, the vicious
wiggled ears 'en virulent
miracles
belt-bred

Botany

Live and step lightly,
 young lovers
 Live and step lightly,
 old friend

The bounty deceives
 and the sea is too deep

Seeds newly, unevenly, recently
 deposited in the soil black

Walk with your old boots v'd,
 joined at the back
 cover them

Searching for value in tiny towns
 Touching everything,
 Cheaply
 but I breathe in every whisper of audacity
 so that I can fill myself up
 and become something

Summer House

The world is my ashtray
dare I seek the sight
of the spider-laden sages
or the dour children,
falling
or the new money-filled lake
and its endless coves of
desperate happening

Perpetually breathless,
accelerating in a fish tank

You're the smell of the dusk heat
escaping the city
and the sound of fresh wind in my ears

I am learning

Virginia's Place

Browning Locust leaves begin to
 blanket the little lagoon
 Tendral-stumps ratchet
 the bank in place

The ticks have gone away
 and the corn's tasseling
 steadily
 cozies the world

Overgrown chicken coop rubble
 surrounds the shed,
 sterilized by desolate decades

The spaceship's on the dirt
 behind the six-row

The old Oliver is my favorite friend

Reunion is always occasion
 and always as I'd left it

Headed-out sneezing
 honing noble posture

Black Venice

Observing imagined gondolas on canals through my
bluegreen memory
along with my own movements
in reflection,
unnecessary

The rats are real,
at least

The romance of far-off water cities is
lost on me,
and the intricacy of companionship
is mentioned far too little
when the robin's egg walls
berode cigarette smoke and coffee

Rifles on the stoop
Nature in the shag

between sleeping and waking,
the viscerally pleasant scent
of washing denim for working

Give the rain purpose and
rut the soil for a season

Broken week of fever'd
 beδsickness
 with a δrink of the brittleδ
 well's tenacity
 Riδδling with clay turns bounty
 to impressionably fickle reality

Earth curves away too soon
 the tilled horizon
 and the ill-grated gravel
 upon which so many
 have tried to outrun death's
 Sunday morning apparition

*A little of everything
 every thing little*

Happiness is
 a full tank of gasoline
 a new pack of cigarettes
 a roof for your history
 where it's admirable to
 compartmentalize and discipline
 one's iδentity
 (maybe it is)

On Infatuation

Mothers on stilts above an
energetic boil
compressing the stream to break
the universe as wholly as I can
manage to fathom the distance
to mind the gap that is,
by clarity,
widening

I should've tried harder to
capture the essence of you
but the few notes I knew
couldn't contain your ambition

Only you do I allow myself
to wonder under everything,
knee-to-chin

My song,
though,
is ever-growing
as you were absently reminding
where to reach
ever further,
still

Escape Velocity

Metronomal

knoll-combed clouds approach,

suspending persistent exhaust

wretch of absent infecting

staying assured dystopic

post-ing

tick-teetering defaulted ritual

martyring

Croaking up flights

muttering downwind

their stumbles through life

She believed what was easier to believe

Shy's notice

I gave as much as

could be allowed

in winter's warm

our qualm

notwithstanding nigh

adrenaline's nudge

Emptying

the vacuum

Soul Water

Movement

in bitter

vibrations

about

weighted clique

in the sooted

pit

Selling whatever

and approaching some place to be saved,

surreal

or left

or dead

but included

There's a love of

the upset condition

of leaving the bitterness in the bathroom

Fool me,

but it's expensive

seeking and gluttoning the

spirit medicine

The muse of a thousand obstructions

frighten amassed

pulled anatomy of cowards to

the drudged rhythm

Open something unwanted for
wilting wanters
tonight

Take it
and you'll thank everything
give it all away

What is it, now?

Instinctual attachment
to your beauty
means I didn't want to leave
the moment I saw you,
whirling
But you are just a face
But maybe you saw me

Savage Grace

Accompany me with your night
to our hideaway from *pleasant surprise*

Glide me through what trees you give
move'd about striding cruel stream

I am yours to reflect
and bear with noble assumptions
to reciprocally know across our
existential divide

to divulge few precious
cross-corridor smiles
to know with only a rhythmic zest
a favorite name

Such designed convergence!
Such intentful patience!
My escape in heavy air
accepting as last heir
to your
sanctuary of apathy
or so it seems in our newborn night
lit by nearly-familiar intermittent tower lights
to reveal a way devoid of purposeless reciprocation
remind me occasionally,
but not this night

To hum the music and dance in your
 beautiful retreat with the voice
 of a coincidence
 of a comfort
 of a pinnacle
 seen in sunlight one more time
 over the hedge
 by old plotting eyes
 that wonder'd
 in dignified legacy
 It was a shame

The voice of my dancer
 sustains necessary function to indulge
 our wary dark dabbling

Too occupied to sound off
 for warmth in kind that is
 appropriately distanced
 in disgust
 without fail,
 instinctually instantaneously

Briskly striding through the blackness
 without complaint
 or its language,
 paced by ancient intuition

Ye sure-footed sage
 Ye lethal lunar predator

Killing as serenity obscured
 by silence's sleepy wool

Stitched and bound by effort's promise

Visible only as correct form to voluntarily carry
 noble titles
 through nostalgic undulations

*O' little city
 of quirk and calm
 Whom only I know truly,
 alone*

Love yourself and go away
 Tenses meander and play
 through a churning human sea
 The taxation of diligence
 for a reserve that could never
 be objectively respectable
 (nor profane)
 It smooths habitual language
 to their most
 dependably honed state

Underbluff

I drove my truck to the valley with a forty

I found a little peace

I found a little respite,

as had many before me

And it's in such an affection

that I lay

And I thanked,

habitually

In particular,

nobody

And I remember the family

in a similar state

speaking old words of past lovers

that had *let themselves go*

Perhaps, only in that moment,

I wished them well

Stirred sparrow storm

Where are your keenest words?

Where is your golden drum?

Could there be a man less burdened that I,

with my unscrupulous song?

Δenim Δeacon

Barreled playing
 reminiscent of original daydreams
 but retarded by bigger desires and obligations
 If you could choose to return to the place
 where everything could be wanted,
 would you?

From the position of some limited fulfillment?
 Risk.

I never arrived at the horizon
 but *saw* of it
 plenty,
 in passing

In me,
 the *need* to work it
 to handle it
 to pull it
 to yank it around the yard

Even test,
 or give it a go,
 at least

Lich of the heading
 the shedding behind troughs
 and supremely forgotten instruments
 Child of the least-thought-of places
 still a bit insistent upon them
 upon his own illumination

Regular

By ill luminate
 the suspect and spectacle
 of a crowd under that duck blanket
 the one on the couch
 the essence of affection is,
 in fact,
 with the oldest of us
 Every distraction falls away
 eventually
 for all of us
 Caught always after
 in cracks,
 slipping
 like the futile cup you attempt to hold well water with
 Respect and fear play together
 as they have for ages
 as peoples of each Holy book,
 respectively
 Where are we really living?
 and is it in years?
 Can it be held
 or kept
 with enough cash?
 Do you nullify sacrifice with time?
 Leave it on the porch for the sun to fade

On Collateral

We are magnetic fission
Elastic & wishing
for the tide to come back

Geologically,
I am as unstable
as the summer sea

Wisdom & I
at odds with mediocrity

I cannot ask you
to stabilize me

It takes bravery to kiss a ghost,
but we have little else,
pressing

Vivacious blue
kicking up dust
making loud crystals
Aimless abuse,
spoiling in gloom
Lively living,
rarely reaching
My wildest places,
all in timing

Southing

The opulent dance
on warming current,
rising
The anomalous pair
through the little city,
haunting
Livid lightning in the gray gloom
erratic stings hovered decorum
on my sleepy peace
Default equations writ the
heart-turned-machine
prosthetic in jest;
hourglass emptying
Draw of static sans
companionship of loyal light
Competent senses,
an ultimate sentence when the
clouds have so far descended
Relentless
 endless
Mist of all time,
misremembered

Home

Pedestrian solidity is
past
when the grain of the street
is swept in my hour

My hour,
when the city's
too cold for the lonely
and sure
and the contrast
of the contact
you won't have
owns one
for a moment of
serenity amongst
splintered trees and
resting doors

Flailing through my second Earth
over and over,
into you

On Serenity

My silence is cosmic
 and my peace is the morning
 I am the mountain
 and its road
 I am the unseen envy
 of the unseen man
 My breath is rare
 and my hands are poets
 You could imagine the Holy night
 and its shedding
 When all the energy has gone
 and the streets are swept,
 I am life and death
 and home

I was told I'm *not at peace*
 of all things
 me, not co-existing with the sleeping streets
 every night while you were resting
 and seeking them in dreams which you chase away

Not *at peace* with the trenches
 I cross every day
 that I helped dig
 or the burrowing into the embraceless black like a
 wandering wraith
 The bowl of pause I volitionally jumped in

The Other Woman

Delicate whisper notes
 Fragile crystalline jewels
 in freefalling tumble
 down to my lips

They hang there
 in a minor wail
 The surface of the pool
 rippled into hills
 Each crest in time
 with the soft balsa hammers
 striking
 my cheeks
 Light linen kisses

Night is sanctuary and observatory of

Ends

Day is just the means to them

Tick in arc away the rations

and moderate considerations

I like big claims

because I make them

I don't like winding down

I prefer to run-leap

and tumble

River Queen

An allergy to conviction swells in the bleak face
 of beauty,
 cupped in my hands
 over the fading red-checkered fruitile carpet
 flooring the hotel lobby

I wonder if I'll be allowed to slip for a moment
 and lapse some cognitive energy
 or if the cultists spy me for a cheap
 bust of pounding feet

Even so far away,
 I recompile while the strange metropolis sleeps,
 curious for the form of conformity
 manifesting before me
 like dwelling in the dreary aftermath
 of arranged comically diverse endeavors

The expanse could be barren
 or filled with trapped cascading
 ripples of you
 Molding the sky to a diaphragm,
 upsetting my poise
 I'd like to play my part,
 thanks

Mint Monk

For me, only?

I remember our pilgrimage fondly

Our starry Spring sabbatical

With the swayful white lady

and her leather hugs

Evermore we knew for

every silent home sauntered by

Only best friends can impart such generosity,

wordlessly

A piece of fatherhood,

mutually

First-hand American grace,

originally

elegant

Artifactual sage of pure indulgences,

lost

Neverboring partner in a time-traveling

bubble of (sometimes contentious) rhetoric

but inevitably adored by onlooking admirers

Easy-over the highways under ancient sky

Our chance to ask divine questions

and count upon sureful answers

346

Cryptobotanical detergent odors
stripe the city

Luna has just hidden away,
but I still see Polaris clearly

I'm engaged in my shadowgrave,
cresting mist in duality,
paved

The weary and their cars
reviving

idling

I,

as them with dew'd
shoulders
silk-enclosed

As horizons bezel gradients,
startlers find no more entertainment
in the beat
and return with the owls to roost
until the city goes back to sleep

There was a different smell that
Spring

We departed the country,
but never left
Mutual youthful surreality,
kisses in the back seat

The Landing

Nodding off with the river nomads,
waking them before twilight with
down-come discoursing on Muddy's simmering thrash

Inexplicable stirring opposite outline'd bank

as she savagely deepens

Intermittently-corporeal,

Bitter-ramp postulate,

Ever-tumbling vertigate,

Δegenerate

with a fountain pen

and I catch a whiff of past

Twain-toδδling

academic Mark-fetishing

(Polishing half-δesks with shaving cream)

and I give a little tug on the knot that's tethered me

to the quaint little village;

The outpost of lamplight

on a bend of the widening *Missouri*

Graceful pressure elliptically to
my lips

My hand smalleδ behind you
to fit,
us
as if

Over Ozark

Faith

the virus that topples
hourly wages

They've bandaged the road with
black toothpaste

We've come back
dreary doom impending

My skull bounces against the window
overtime

Why couldn't his skin to the glass
be given?

They've reduced wing-walking, strut-hammocking,
and free-loving to bags of
salted peanuts and vomit

You could scoop the gray
from the sky with a fish net

I'll pray for you

My bare feet lose
heat from the passing wet wind
before gaining it back
through the light
of Sol

ascenδing above yonδer steeple
My book's pages require a δefense
from ranks of lonely morning spiders
though they δecrease from
all-nighter sleepiness

My thumb rests unintentionally
on the transmit button
Our jokes are hearδ
but not listened to

Methods methods methods
glueδ together;

Communal confrontation

I break too many things that aren't mine
I'm too often forgiven

The clock on the ashen kitchen wall
whistles on the thirδ birδ
waves of sound carrying the soap smell
It floats,
Purpose-δriven

Forespring

I welcomed and waited for the freezing icing every winter
and relished the panic in the sparse pedestrian's face

Afraid because their brains persistently
strayed to the numbness
seeping through their
fleece
and they couldn't calm their
scurrying feet
fleeing holiday retreat
out of streets
that,
seasonally
treat me royally

So desperately hurriedly
into circling loved ones who'd never
sink
to reasoned love for anyone

Stooped,
the fireplace dulled me to sleep

I partook in conspiracy;
arranged my own robbery

I still('δ) holler from my winδow
 so they('δ)slip,
 bewilδereδ
 (Less, so it steals from them)

Willeδ to have it taken from me
 so I'δ enδeavor to make more

When in Luna'δly tunδral,
 I whisper threats to my own being
 anδ am lucriδly aliveδ
 by its earnestness in crisential
 brittling-beget luciδity

Leave no room for empathy
 δown my frigiδ apogee

29.92 Hg

Visibility in the city must inevitably improve;
 the Gulf Stream shunned the flakes away

You are the sun

You saw me,
serene
through the branches above the park I scambly ignored
and never missed anchorage
to *my* rose skies
transcended reservations,
weighted

You are *my* sun
and now you know why

Heavens!
I anticipate the day
cleansing
summer rain

Smartly

Death is defined most accurately, I think, as *the* journey to a place from which one can never return. If you've accepted all other processes as reversible, you can't fear.

If the Captain's charter slips out of his hands in a careless moment and is destroyed in the sea, does he have a destination?

Immediately, of course, he attempts recovery. Though it may be riddled with panic, his mind is a habitual machine, and it is occupied by grids and coordinates and persistence. It is not the custom to question; his cohorts follow his orders. His vessel's course is altered by his will to *retrieve*.

It is amidst the sea spray and chaotic shouting that he must *pause*. He must realize, eventually, that the uncoated stock of his manifest has already committed itself to oblivion in its tendency to absorb. He's always known this, if not explicitly. This is the reason it is kept in the heart of the ship – the furthest away from the natural danger of the water.

In this moment, the Captain experiences true hopelessness and regret. He understands that he has taken his purpose for granted. He is far from weeping, but he resents himself.

When he ceases the search, he cannot explain. To burn fuel in a repetitive grid for this Divine note is futile, and the expense of livelihoodless resupply weighs upon him as he grasps for the words to order drift.

The purposefulness of his employees has earned them respect and now the Captain cannot demand of them, nothingness. He orders the engines stopped, and he begins to sing the helmsman a sad song.

*My Susie,
she comes home to me
With a broken heart,
nightly
I asked of her
a fearless kiss
Her hand, her heart
Smarthly*

The bridge crew have never heard this song, but the eeriness of their present situation's contrast to the industriousness of their system not ten minutes before has left their Captain and his tune considerably beyond the realm of humor.

*My Susie
requires but one fickle fee
lest her raven hair swaddle me
Compass for a kiss,
no less
Left to wander
eternally*

His voice dies away as he surveys his song's reception with a greedy grin. He has anchored his lot completely, and stolen their intent from them. It took him less than sixty seconds.

“I have a game to propose, gentlemen.” His arm enacts a sweep of their chins, as if to caress each one. “We are now the wandering folk, and I am the drifting noise. You may all jump ship now, but I’m headed nowhere.” “Full speed ahead! Somebody remove ye crewman’s head and I’ll shower you with all the jewels I have left!”

These particular young men are nothing less than contemporary, and are therefore quite startled.

“I am beauty and lust. I am the leader and lost. I am your best and my worst. I am many things, but I am not a fool to burden.”

For a moment, the Captain sees in himself a frightening rejection of the sea he loves. The grain of the helm disgusts him, briefly, and he scoffs. Internally, he sets to burning all but the reason of himself.

“I am here because I prefer. I prefer life to death. I prefer the living to the dead. I prefer free breathing to suffocation. I prefer my beauty over that which disgusts me. The sea does not prefer, but it does not disgust me, for it has always been.”

“I prefer this ship to any other because it is beautiful. I prefer each one of you to the torrent because you understand the exchanges we make with one another. That wretched purpose to which I have pursued of late, however, I *hate*.”

“It was fragile and vulnerable. It was not of our blood. It was so unworthy, but so necessary that I have never been more conflicted. Because of my actions and their intellectual consequences, I hereby order myself executed immediately and I so relinquish command of this vessel.”

It took a few minutes of blank stares and an ungodly amount of energy redirected for the sailor’s more or less rudimentary contemplation, but finally, the XO stepped forward. He lightly affixed himself to the Captain’s arm and led him to the brig, where he remained voluntarily for the voyage to home & penance.

Naturally, the extremity of his outburst would be repeated and exaggerated for generations of sailors. It would even be admired for its beauty by one, but it was never acknowledged as a coherent manifesto by any, and most decent men with healthy minds would give a “good riddance” to the Captain and his tale and be off, smartly.

And so, I shall.

Good morning.