

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago  
– never mind how long precisely  
– having little or no money in  
my purse, and nothing particular  
to interest me on shore, I thought  
I would sail about a little and see  
the watery part of the world. It  
is a way I have of driving off the  
spleen and regulating the circulation.  
Whenever I find myself growing  
grim about the mouth; whenever  
it is a damp, drizzly November  
in my soul; whenever I find myself  
involuntarily pausing before  
coffin warehouses, and bringing  
up the rear of every funeral  
I meet; and especially whenever  
my hypos get such an upper hand  
of me, that it requires a strong  
moral principle to prevent me  
from deliberately stepping into  
the street, and methodically knocking  
people's hats off – then, I account  
it high time to get to sea  
as soon as I can. This is my  
substitute for pistol and ball. With  
a philosophical flourish Cato throws  
himself upon his sword; I quietly  
take to the ship. There is nothing  
surprising in this. If they but  
knew it, almost all men in their  
degree, some time or other, cherish  
very nearly the same feelings  
towards the ocean with me.