

## The Light at Robin's Bay

As I walked upon a rugged trail  
On the rocky coast of Maine  
The cold wind rolled in with the gale,  
Fine sleet mixed with the rain.  
The noon was ghastly pale.

I could barely keep my footing right  
On the narrow, stony way;  
Then I came at last upon a light  
That signaled Robin's Bay.  
On it I fixed my sight.

The storm had risen to fearful din  
As I reached the lighthouse gate.  
A wail, like none e'er heard by men;  
The hopeless cries of Fate  
Resounded from within.

My wits I gathered around me;  
'Twas just the storm I had heard.  
I was cold and wet and hungry;  
I wished to hear a kind word.  
How long I had been at sea!

So I stepped up to the lighthouse door  
Knocking with earnest prayer;  
"Oh God, please let there be answer.  
I cannot go on from here.  
I will not trouble Thee more."

Ere I raised my eyes from prayer,  
From the lighthouse tower I heard  
The keeper's step upon the stairs  
With these disquieting words;  
"Be gone ye vermin out there!"

"Keeper", I cried, "Don't turn me away;  
I'm weary, hungry, and cold."  
Though now I wish I'd gone on that day,  
I knocked more loudly and bold.  
He answered, "Be gone, I say!"

"Please just let me stand if I may,"  
(I knocked again and again)  
"Before your fire, oh sir, I pray"  
At last he bid me come in  
The lighthouse at Robin's Bay.

The light keeper was an ageless man  
Who reeked of rum and the sea  
His blue eyes bore in his face of tan  
A touch of insanity;  
He held a lamp in hand.

The clothes he wore were threadbare and old.  
He looked a pitiful sight.  
The buttons though were made of gold,  
His braid shined in the light;  
A sailor, once proud and bold.

He pointed to a chair by the fire;  
I took off my coat to dry.  
The sleet and wind like a thousand choirs  
Sang dolefully outside.  
I sat down, numb and tired.

For a long while, he piped not a sound.  
We sat in the fire's red glow;  
But then at once, his speech he found,  
Thundering loud and low,  
These words that rang profound:

"Have ye ever met the Devil, man?"  
He barked across the room,  
"I have, and since ye got no plans,  
"You'll hear me tale o' doom."  
He paled and wrung his hands.

"I was captain of the Dolphin Queen  
Bound from the Dover Coast.  
Hidden in her bowels unseen,  
The things men love the most;  
Silver, Gold, and Emerald Green.

The 'Queen' she was the pride o' her day,  
And she sailed the seven seas;  
Until that 'noon off Robin's Bay  
She met her destiny  
In a most peculiar way.

A storm as wicked at that outside  
Rose up with sudden wrath.  
The sea, a monster come alive,  
Left in its aftermath  
Wreckage, the Dead, and their Cries.

Eighty-two men had perished that 'noon,  
Adrift in the freezin' spray.  
The Dolphin Queen lay dyin' upon  
The rocks along Robin's Bay.  
There, I was left, alone.

I know not why of all the lost,  
'Twas I he chose that day.  
Perhaps before the holocaust  
The light on Robin's Bay  
Burned bright, but all for naught.

A captain's slip can be his doom,  
Then so for all o' his hands.  
Could I have missed amid the gloom  
The light that warned of land?  
Oh such an icy tomb!"

The captain's voice broke with these words.  
I felt the grief he bore;  
The saddest tale I'd ever heard -  
"But here, now, man there's more,"  
He said, his passion stirred.

"I was washed upon the rocky shore;  
No breath remained in me.  
I wished t'God I'd lived no more  
To look out upon the sea;  
Survey that scene o' gore!

But I awoke t' meet the Devil,  
And a handsome lad was he  
With great shoulders broad and level,  
Clothed in his finery;  
He bid me do his will."

"Your duty is to keep the light  
Forevermore", he said.  
"Keep it burning strong and bright;  
By chance you warn the Dead  
From such endless, hopeless plight."

"Y'see, man, now what is me doom,  
T'watch forevermore;  
To shine the light into the gloom,  
Far out beyond the shore  
On that cold and dreadful tomb!

I know I strike the light in vain;  
It always shines unseen,  
Burning bright out over Robin's Bay  
T'warn the Dolphin Queen  
By her captain 'midst the fray."

As the captain spoke these last few words,  
The gates of Hell gave way.  
Above the storm were voices heard  
Of men in fear and pain.  
I looked out, horror filled.

A broken ship, a rocky coast,  
A crew in agony;  
The one thing I remember most,  
A captain in the sea  
*With the gold upon his coat!*

On with my coat and into the gale  
In hope of giving aid.  
But I slipped upon the rocky trail;  
Recalling only pain,  
Then waking cold and pale.

The sea had ceased its vicious fight,  
Black night was falling fast.  
Of ship and crew I found no sight;  
No trace of sail or mast,  
Or that single harbor light!

When I looked back upon the shore,  
There was no lighthouse there!  
A dream like none I'd had before  
Had caught me unaware.  
I laughed, and cursed, and swore.

I walked further down along the way;  
In shallows there I saw.  
An artifact in Robin's Bay  
That struck me dumb with awe.  
(I've kept it to this day.)

A single piece of flotsam seen  
Awash in the cold, dark sea.  
Inscribed in letters, bold and green  
The words still haunting me;  
**"H. M. S. Dolphin Queen"**

TMJ February, 1988