

from "Wheels and Rhymes: A Collection of Steampunk and Pirate Poetry" by Ron Perovich

The Lad Who Cried Kraken

Scarcely out of port we were
Before the questioning began.
This one's a reader, to be sure,
But of what, I nay understand!
For some script filled his freckled head
With no ocean I e'er sailed,
And even greenest sailor's dread
He by comparison left paled.

Why, 'twas on that first fortnight
He exclaimed, "Oh, scraping sound!
Be it bony claws by moonlight,
To jealous pull the living down?"
I nearly dropped my lantern cold,
As I quickly there denied,
"Nay, just cargo in the hold,
Shifting weight from side to side."

Quelled for but a day he was,
"Till once again he cried out, "Hark!
The creaking sound of great whale jaws,
Unhinging in the abyssal dark,
To swallow us whole, first and last!"
The crew, amidst guffaws, rescind,
"Nay, just bending beam and mast,
As we tack into the wind."

Nearly to our destination,
His sea legs fin'ly fit and broke,
He followed our eyes' investigation,
"That ship," says he, "some fisher folk?
Come to welcome us through the shoal?"
All were silent save for one.
"Nay, that great sail and flag of coal
Tell perhaps our tale is done."